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LETTERS

OF THE

REV. SAMUEL RUTHERFORD,

PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY AT ST. ANDREW'S,

WITH

A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE,

BY THE

REV. A. A. BONAR,

AUTHOR OF THE MEMOIR OF ROBERT MURRAY M'CHEYNE.

"Rutherford's Letters is one of my classics. Were truth the beam, I have no doubt, that if Homer, and Virgil, and Horace, and all that the world has agreed to idolize, were weighed against that book, they would be lighter than vanity."—CECIL.

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CONTENTS.

Advertisement vii
Sketch of Samuel Rutherford and his Letters ix

LETTER		PAGE
1.	To Marion Macknaught	31
2.	To a Gentlewoman	31
3.	To a Christian Gentlewoman	32
4.	To Lady Kenmure	34
5.	To the same	36
6.	To the same	38
7.	To Marion Macknaught	39
8.	To Lady Kenmure	40
9.	To the same	42
10.	To Marion Macknaught	44
11.	To the same	47
12.	To the same	48
13.	To the same	49
14.	To the same	51
15.	To Lady Kenmure	51
16.	To the same	53
17.	To the same	56
18.	To the same	58
19.	To Marion Macknaught	59
20.	To the same	62
21.	To the same	64
22.	To the same	65
23.	To the same	66
24.	To Lady Kenmure	67
25.	To the same	70
26.	To the same	71
27.	To Marion Macknaught	73
28.	To Lady Kenmure	74
29.	To the same	75
30.	To Marion Macknaught	77
31.	To the same	78
32.	To the same	79
33.	To Lady Kenmure	80
34.	To Marion Macknaught	82
35.	To Lady Kenmure	82
36.	To Marion Macknaught	84
37.	To Lady Kenmure	85
38.	To the same	87
39.	To Marion Macknaught	87
40.	To the same	89
41.	To the same	91
42.	To the same	91
43.	To the same	93
44.	To the same	95
45.	To the same	96
46.	To the same	97
47.	To the same	98
48.	To the same	99
49.	To the same	100
50.	To the same	101
51.	To Marion Macknaught	102
52.	To the same	102
53.	To Earlston, Elder	103
54.	To Marion Macknaught	105
55.	To Lady Kenmure	106
56.	To the same	107
57.	To Marion Macknaught	108
58.	To the same	111
59.	To the same	112
60.	To the same	113
61.	To Lady Kenmure	114
62.	To Lady Culross	115
63.	To Mr. Robert Cunningham	117
64.	To Alexander Gordon	119
65.	To Robert Gordon	120
66.	To the same	120
67.	To William Fullerton	121
68.	To his Parishioners at Anwoth	122
69.	To Lady Kenmure	124
70.	To the same	126
71.	To Hugh Mackail	128
72.	To John Fleming	129
73.	To Earlston, Elder	130
74.	To Lady Culross	131
75.	To William Gordon	132
76.	To John Kennedy	134
77.	To Lord Boyd	135
78.	To Margaret Ballantyne	136
79.	To Robert Gordon	138
80.	To Marion Macknaught	140
81.	To Mr. John Meine	140
82.	To Cardoness, Elder	141
83.	To the Earl of Lothian	144
84.	To Jean Brown	146
85.	To John Kennedy	148
86.	To Elizabeth Kennedy	150
87.	To Jonet Kennedy	152
88.	To a Christian Gentlewoman	153
89.	To Lord Craighall	155
90.	To John Kennedy	157
91.	To Mr. Robert Blair	159
92.	To Mr. John Livingston	161
93.	To Mr. Ephraim Melvin	162
94.	To Robert Gordon	163
95.	To Lady Kenmure	166
96.	To the same	167
97.	To the same	168
98.	To the same	169
99.	To Alexander Gordon	170
100.	To Mr. Alexander Colville	172

LETTER		PAGE
101.	To Earlston, Younger	173
102.	To Lady Cardoness	175
103.	To Jonet Macculloch	176
104.	To Alexander Gordon	177
105.	To Lady Cardoness	178
106.	To Lady Kenmure	179
107.	To a Gentlewoman	181
108.	To Lady Kenmure	182
109.	To Lady Boyd	184
110.	To Lady Kaskiberry	185
111.	To Lady Earlston	186
112.	To Mr. David Dickson	187
113.	To Jean Brown	188
114.	To Mr. John Fergushill	189
115.	To Mr. Robert Douglas	190
116.	To William Rigge	191
117.	To Mr. Alexander Henderson	192
118.	To Lord Loudon	193
119.	To Mr. William Dalgleish	195
120.	To Mr. Hugh Mackail	196
121.	To Lady Boyd	197
122.	To Mr. David Dickson	199
123.	To Mr. Matthew Mowat	200
124.	To William Halliday	202
125.	To a Gentlewoman	203
126.	To John Gordon, Younger	204
127.	To John Gordon, Elder	205
128.	To Lady Forret	206
129.	To Marion Macknaught	207
130.	To John Carsen	207
131.	To Lady Boyd	208
132.	To the Earl of Cassillis	210
133.	To Robert Gordon	211
134.	To John Kennedy	212
135.	To Jean Brown	214
136.	To Jean Macmillan	216
137.	To Lady Busbie	216
138.	To John Ewart	218
139.	To William Fullerton	219
140.	To Robert Glendinning	219
141.	To William Glendinning	221
142.	To Mr. Hugh Henderson	221
143.	To the Earl of Cassillis	222
144.	To Lord Balmerino	224
145.	To Lady Mar, Younger	225
146.	To James Macadam	225
147.	To William Livingston	226
148.	To William Gordon	227
149.	To Mr. George Gillespie	228
150.	To Jean Gordon	229
151.	To Mr. James Bruce	230
152.	To John Gordon	230
153.	To Lady Hallhill	231
154.	To John Osburn	232
155.	To John Henderson	233
156.	To John Meine	234
157.	To Mr. Thomas Garven	234
158.	To Bethaia Aird	236
159.	To Alexander Gordon	237
160.	To Grizzel Fullerton	237
161.	To Patrick Carsen	238
162.	To Carlton	238
163.	To Lady Busbie	240
164.	To John Fleming	242
165.	To Alexander Gordon	244
166.	To Lady Boyd	246
167.	To Mr. David Dickson	248
168.	To the Laird of Carlton	249
169.	To Robert Gordon	251
170.	To the Laird of Moncrieff	253
171.	To John Clark	255
172.	To Cardoness, Elder	256
173.	To Cardoness, Younger	258
174.	To Lord Craighall	259
175.	To John Laurie	262
176.	To Carlton	264
177.	To Marion Macknaught	267
178.	To Lady Culross	269
179.	To Mr. John Nevay	271
180.	To John Gordon, Elder	274
181.	To Earlston, Younger	278
182.	To Alexander Gordon	281
183.	To Mr. J. R.	284
184.	To Mr. William Dalgleish	286
185.	To Marion Macknaught	289
186.	To John Gordon	290
187.	To Mr. Hugh Henderson	292
188.	To Lady Largirie	293
189.	To Earlston, Younger	294
190.	To Mr. William Dalgleish	296
191.	To the Laird of Cally	298
192.	To John Gordon, Younger	299
193.	To Robert Gordon	301
194.	To Alexander Gordon	303
195.	To Robert Stuart	305
196.	To Lady Gaitgirth	308
197.	To Mr. John Fergushill	309
198.	To John Stuart	311
199.	To Carsluth	313
200.	To Cassincarrie	315
201.	To Lady Cardoness	317
202.	To Sibylla Macadam	318
203.	To the Laird of Cally	319
204.	To William Gordon	321
205.	To Margaret Fullerton	323
206.	To Lady Kenmure	324
207.	To the same	325
208.	To John Henderson	328
209.	To Mr. Alexander Colville	328
210.	To Mr. John Nevay	329
211.	To Lady Boyd	330
212.	To William Glendinning	332
213.	To Robert Lennox	333
214.	To Mr. James Hamilton	335
215.	To Mistress Stuart	337
216.	To Mr. Hugh Mackail	338
217.	To Alexander Gordon	340
218.	To John Bell, Elder	341
219.	To Mr. John Row	342
220.	To Lord Craighall	343
221.	To Marion Macknaught	343
222.	To Lady Culross	344
223.	To Alexander Gordon	346
224.	To Fulwood, Younger	348
225.	To his Parishioners	349
226.	To Lady Kilconquhair	355
227.	To Lord Craighall	359
228.	To Mr. James Fleming	361
229.	To Mr. Hugh Mackail	363
230.	To Lady Kenmure	364

LETTER		PAGE
231.	To Lord Lindsay	366
232.	To Lord Boyd	368
233.	To Fulk Elies	371
234.	To James Lindsay	373
235.	To Lord Craighall	376
236.	To Mr. James Hamilton	377
237.	To the Laird of Gaitgirth	378
238.	To Lady Gaitgirth	379
239.	To Mr. Matthew Mowat	380
240.	To Mr. John Meine	382
241.	To John Fleming	382
242.	To Lady Rowallan	383
243.	To Marion Macknaught	384
244.	To the same	385
245.	To Lady Boyd	387
246.	To Mr. Thomas Garven	389
247.	To Jonet Kennedy	389
248.	To Margaret Reid	391
249.	To James Bautie	392
250.	To John Stuart	396
251.	To the same	399
252.	To the same	400
253.	To Lady Busbie	403
254.	To Ninian Mure	404
255.	To Mr. Thomas Garven	405
256.	To the Earl of Cassillis	406
257.	To Lady Largirie	408
258.	To Lady Dungueigh	409
259.	To Jonet Macculloch	410
260.	To Mr. George Gillespie	411
261.	To Mr. Robert Blair	411
262.	To Lady Carlton	413
263.	To William Rigge	414
264.	To Lady Craighall	416
265.	To Lord Loudon	417
266.	To Mr. David Dickson	420
267.	To Alexander Gordon	421
268.	To Lady Kilconquhair	422
269.	To Robert Lennox	423
270.	To Marion Macknaught	425
271.	To Thomas Corbet	425
272.	To Mr. George Dunbar	426
273.	To John Fleming	428
274.	To William Glendinning	428
275.	To Earlston, Younger	429
276.	To John Gordon	430
277.	To William Rigge	432
278.	To James Murray	433
279.	To Mr. John Fergushill	433
280.	To William Glendinning	436
281.	To Marion Macknaught	438
282.	To Lady Robertland	438
283.	To Lord Loudon	440
284.	To Professors of Christ in Ireland	442
285.	To Robert Gordon	448
286.	To Parishioners of Kilmalcolm	451
287.	To Lady Kenmure	456
288.	To Persecuted Church in Ireland	458
289.	To Dr. Alexander Leighton	464
290.	To Mr. Henry Stuart, etc.	466
291.	To Mrs. Pont	471
292.	To Mr. James Wilson	473
293.	To Lady Boyd	475
294.	To John Fenwick	477
295.	To Peter Stirling	481
296.	To Lady Fingask	482
297.	To Mr. David Dickson	484
298.	To Lady Boyd	485
299.	To Agnes Macmath	488
300.	To Mr. Matthew Mowat	489
301.	To Lady Kenmure	490
302.	To Lady Boyd	491
303.	To James Murray's Wife	492
304.	To Lady Kenmure	493
305.	To the same	494
306.	To Lady Boyd	495
307.	To Mistress Taylor	496
308.	To Barbara Hamilton	498
309.	To Mistress Hume	500
310.	To Lady Kenmure	501
311.	To Barbara Hamilton	502
312	To a Christian Friend	503
313.	To a Christian Brother	504
314.	To a Christian Gentlewoman	505
315.	To Lady Kenmure	508
316.	To Mr. J. G.	509
317.	To Lady Kenmure	510
318.	To Lady Ardross	511
319.	To M. O.	512
320.	To Earlston, Elder	514
321.	To Mr. George Gillespie	515
322.	To Mistress Gillespie	516
323.	To Col. Gilbert Ker	517
324.	To the same	519
325.	To Mr. William Guthrie	520
326.	To Col. Gilbert Ker	521
327.	To the same	522
328.	To the same	524
329.	To the same	527
330.	To Lady Kenmure	528
331.	To the same	529
332.	To Grizzel Fullerton	530
333.	To Lady Kenmure	531
334.	To Col. Gilbert Ker	532
335.	To Mr. John Scott	534
336.	To Lady Kenmure	535
337.	To the same	536
338.	To the same	536
339.	To Mr. John Scott	537
340.	To the same	537
341.	To Mr. James Durham	538
342.	To Mr. John Scott	539
343.	To Lady Kenmure	539
344.	To the same	540
345.	To Mr. Guthrie, Mr. Traill, etc.	542
346.	To some Brethren	543
347.	On Petitioning Charles II.	544
348.	To Lady Kenmure	546
349.	To Mistress Craig	547
350.	To Mr. James Guthrie	549
351.	To Mr. Robert Campbell	550
352.	To Aberdeen	551

ADVERTISEMENT.

In this edition of "The Letters" of that eminently holy minister of the Gospel, who suffered so much persecution for the Word of God, and for Scotland's Covenanted Work of Reformation, the Rev. Samuel Rutherford, the text—which, in later editions, had, through carelessness of printing, unacquaintance with the Scottish dialect, and attempts to substitute English words and phrases for Scotch ones, become very corrupt—has, by a careful collation of the earliest editions, been corrected and restored; while the Scottish words, allusions, and idiomatic phrases are explained in notes at the bottom of the page; and the Letters, which, in some of the former editions, had been very much mutilated, and had, in all of them, been printed without any regard to arrangement, have been arranged according to the dates, in as far as these could be ascertained, at which they were written, and are given without omission, abridgment, suppression, or mutilation.

It is not anticipated that any apology needs to be made for this endeavor to offer to the Christian Public "The Letters" of Rutherford, in a form somewhat worthy of their author's reputation, and of their own intrinsic excellence. It may, perhaps, indeed, be thought by some persons, that it would have been better had English words and phrases been substituted, in the text, for those peculiar to the Scottish dialect; but, had this been attempted, much of the spirit of Rutherford would, in many instances, have evaporated, and the energy of his diction been impaired; while the style, having ceased to be Scotch without becoming English, would have been greatly debased, enfeebled, and vulgarized. By the plan which has been adopted, it is hoped that the language, allowed to remain as Rutherford wrote it, will be rendered at once, and perfectly, intelligible to the southern reader, even though he never before may have seen or heard a word of the northern speech. No Scotchman can find the slightest difficulty in the diction.

Other persons may, perhaps, think that some of the Letters might have been omitted, some of the sentences suppressed, and certain "homely and familiar expressions, which," Wodrow observes, "have been jested on by profane wits of his age," might have been altered, with advantage to this edition. It is true that there are some of the Letters not so valuable to the Christian reader as others; but, perhaps there is not one of them which does not present some useful, if not important instruction, respecting either doctrine or duty. There are, indeed, not a few repetitions, as was to be expected in familiar letters, written to friends and acquaintances, without the remotest anticipation of their ever being published; but, those repetitions are generally statements of facts or feelings regarding matters of absorbing interest to the Christian; and by those,

therefore, who peruse these Letters with the view of spiritually profiting thereby, will not be complained of: and it must be confessed that there are some expressions which "profane wits" might, perhaps, succeed in turning into ridicule; but, as there is no danger that they will be so dealt with by any one who can appreciate the poetic and evangelical beauty of the Song of Solomon, and as it is not very likely that any "profane wit" of this age will ever condescend to look into the Letters of the Rev. Samuel Rutherford, they have been allowed to stand as they came from the pen of that eminently pure and heavenly minded man.

This edition, then, is thus offered respectfully to the Church of God, with humble but fervent supplication, that the Holy Ghost, who so fully dwelt in the venerable Author of these Letters, would bless it, to the promotion of His own glory, by rendering it the means of arousing some thoughtless sinners to consider the things which concern their everlasting peace, before they be forever hid from their eyes, and of building up some of the saints and edifying them in their most holy Faith.

EDITOR.

SKETCH OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD

AND HIS LETTERS.

In the history of the Reformation we read of Brother Martin, a poor monk at Basle, whose hope of salvation rested solely on the Lord Jesus, long before Luther arose. Having written out his confession of reliance on the righteousness of Christ alone, the monk placed the parchment in a wooden box, and shut up the wooden box in a hole of the wall of his cell. It was not till last century that this box with its interesting contents was discovered; but it was brought to light when the old wall of the monastery was taken down. And is it not an incident fitted to suggest to us that Basle may have been made a focus of light in its day very much in answer to the prayers, and in acknowledgment of the faith of this "hidden one," and others like him, who cried day and night to the Lord?

Now, there is a fact not unlike this in the history of the district where Samuel Rutherford labored so lovingly. The people of that shire tell that there was found, some generations ago, in the wall of the old chapel of Earlston, in Kirkcudbrightshire, a copy of *Wickliffe's Bible.* It seems to have been shut into that receptacle in order to be hid from the view of enemies, but no doubt it was the lamp of light to some godly souls—who, perhaps in the silence of night, found opportunity in that chapel to draw it out of its ark and peruse its pages. It seems that the Lollards of Kyle (which is the adjoining district,) had brought it to Earlston; and there were friends or members of the family of Earlston who embraced the gospel even in those days.[1] May we not believe that the Gordons of Earlston, in Rutherford's days, were not a little indebted to the faith and prayers of these ancient witnesses who hid the sacred treasure in the chapel wall? Like the monk of

[1] Some of the ancestors of Viscount Kenmure embraced the principles of Wickliffe in the 16th century.

Basle, their faith and patience were acknowledged in after days by the blessing sent down on that quarter, when the Lord, in remembrance of his "hidden ones,"[1] both raised up the Gordons of Earlston, with many others of a like spirit, and also sent thither his servant Samuel Rutherford, to sound the silver trumpet and make the lamp of truth blaze like a torch all over that region.

Samuel Rutherford was born about the year 1600. His father is supposed to have been a respectable farmer, and he had two brothers, James and George. The place of his birth was not near the scene of his after labors. It is almost certain that Nisbet, a village of Roxburghshire, close to the Teviot, in the parish of Crailing, was his birth-place; not long ago, there were some old people in the parish who remembered the gable-end of the house in which he was born, and which, from respect to his memory, was permitted to stand as long as it could keep together. Some one may yet light upon the well where, when very young, Samuel nearly lost his life. He had been amusing himself with some companions when he fell in, and was left there till they ran and procured assistance; but on reaching the spot, they found him seated on a knoll, cold and dripping, yet uninjured. He told them that "A bonnie white man came and drew him out of the well!" Whether or not he really fancied that an angel had delivered him we cannot tell, but it is plain that at all events his boyish thoughts were already wandering in the region of the sky.

He owed little to his native place. There was not so much of Christ known in that parish then as there is now. For in after days he writes, "My soul's desire is, that the place to which I owe my first birth—in which I fear Christ was scarcely named as touching any reality of the power of godliness,—may blossom as the rose." We have no account of his revisiting these scenes of his early life, though he thus wrote to his friend, Mr. Scott, minister of the adjoining parish of Oxnam. Like Donald Cargill, born in Perthshire, yet never known to preach there even once,—Rutherford's labors were all in other parts of the land. In this arrangement we see the Master's Sovereignty the better; the sphere thus appears evidently to be one of God's choosing for the man, and not the man's gratifying his natural predilections. It accords, too, with the Master's own example, He having never returned to Bethlehem, where he was born, to do any of his works.

Jedburgh is a town three or four miles distant from Nisbet, and

[1] Gen. xix. 29.

thither Samuel went for his education; either walking to it and returning home at evening,—as a school-boy would scarcely grudge to do,—or residing in the town for a season. The school at that time met in a part of the ancient abbey, called from this circumstance the Latiners' Abbey. In the year 1617, we find him farther from home—removed to Edinburgh, which, forty years before, had become the seat of a College, though not as yet a University. There he obtained, in 1621, the degree of A.M. Soon after, he was appointed Regent or Professor of Humanity, though there were three other competitors; for his talents had attracted the notice of many. But, on occasion of a rumor that charged him with some irregularity,—whether with or without foundation, it is now difficult to ascertain,—he demitted his office in 1625, and led a private life, attending prelections on theology, and devoting himself to that study.

It is not unlikely that this may have been the time of which he says in a lettler, "I knew a man who wondered to see any in this life laugh or sport." It may have been then that he was led by the Spirit to know the things that are freely given us of God. We have no proof that he was converted at an earlier period, but rather the opposite. He writes, "Like a fool as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven and near afternoon, before ever I took the gate by the end." And again, "I had stood sure, if in my youth I had borrowed Christ for my bottom." Affliction followed; the clouds returned after the rain; family trials seemed to have been used by the Lord to promote the better growth of the plant of grace. All these dealings of Providence combined to form his character as a man of God and as a pastor.

In 1627 he was settled at Anwoth, a parish situated in Kircudbrightshire, and though at this period Episcopacy had been obtruded upon Scotland, and many faithful ministers were suffering on account of their resistance to its ceremonies and services, yet he appears to have been allowed to enter on his charge without any compliance being demanded, and "without giving any engagement to the Bishop."—He began his ministry from the text John ix. 39. The same Lord that would not let Paul and Timothy preach in Asia,[1] nor in Bithynia, and yet sent to the one region the beloved John,[2] and to the other the scarcely less beloved Peter,[3] in this instance prevented John Livingstone going to Anwoth, (though the patron had designed it for him,) and sent Rutherford instead. This was the more remarkable, because

[1] Acts, xvi. 6, 7. [2] Rev. i. 11. [3] 1 Peter, i. 1.

Livingstone was sent to Ancrum, the parish that borders on Nisbet, while he who was by birth related to that place was dispatched to another spot. This is the Lord's doing. Ministers must not choose according to the flesh.

During the first years of his labors here the sore illness of his wife was a bitter grief to him. Her distress was very severe. He writes of it:—"She is sore tormented night and day.—My life is bitter unto me.—She sleeps none, and cries as a woman travailing in birth; my life was never so wearisome." She continued in this state for no less than a year and a month, ere she died. Besides all this, his two children had been taken from him. Such was the discipline by which he was trained for the duties of a pastor, and by which a shepherd's heart of true sympathy was imparted to him.

Anwoth had no large village near the church. The people were scattered over a hilly district, and were quite a rural flock. But their shepherd found their souls worth the caring for, and did not feel that his learning and talents would be ill spent if laid out in seeking souls, obscure and unknown. See him setting out to visit! passing along yonder field, or climbing that hill in his way to some cottage, his "quick eyes" occasionally glancing on the objects around, but his "face upward" for the most part, as if he were gazing into heaven. He has time to visit, for he rises at three in the morning, and then meets his God in prayer and meditation, and has space for study besides. He takes some days for catechizing. He never fails to be found at the sick-beds of his people. Men said of him, "He is *always* praying, *always* preaching, *always* visiting the sick, *always* catechiizng, *always* writing and studying." He was known to fall asleep at night speaking of Christ, and even to speak of him during his sleep. Indeed, himself speaks of his dreams being of Christ.

His preaching could not but arrest attention, though his elocution was not good, and his voice rather shrill. He was,—according to Wodrow,—"one of the most moving and affectionate preachers in his time, or perhaps in any age of the Church."[1] Especially when he came to dwell upon the subject he so delighted in, Jesus Christ, his manner grew so animated that it seemed as if he would have flown out of the pulpit. An English merchant said of him in days when controversy might have turned him to other themes, "I went to St. Andrew's, where I heard a sweet, majestic looking man (R. Blair,) and he showed

[1] Wodrow's Church Hist. i. 205.

me the majesty of God. After him I heard a little fair man, (Rutherford,) and he showed me *the loveliness of Christ.*"[1]

Anwoth was dear to him[2] as the sphere appointed him by his Master, more than because of the fruits of his labors. Two years after being settled there, he writes, "I see exceedingly small fruit of my ministry. I would be glad of one soul, to be a crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of Christ." His people were "like hot iron, which cooleth when out of the fire." Still he labored in hope, and labored often almost beyond his strength. Once he says, "I have a grieved heart daily in my calling." He speaks of his pained breast, at another time, on the evening of the Lord's Day, when his work was done. But he had seasons of refreshing to his own soul at least—especially when the Lord's Supper was dispensed. Of these seasons he frequently speaks. He asks his friend, Marion Macknaught, to help with her prayers on such an occasion, "that being one of the days wherein Christ was wont to make merry with his friends." It was often then that with special earnestness he besought the Father to distribute "the great Loaf, Christ, to the children of his family."

Anwoth church was filled, but not altogether by parishioners. Many came from great distances; among others, several that were converted, seventeen years before, under John Welsh, at Ayr. These all helped him by their prayers, as did also a goodly number of godly people in the parish itself, who were the fruit of the ministry of his predecessor. Yet over the unsaved he yearned most tenderly. At one time we hear him say, "I would lay my dearest joys in the gap between you and eternal destruction." At another, "My witness is in heaven, your heaven would be two heavens to me, and your salvation two salvations." He could appeal to his people, "My day-thoughts and my night-thoughts are of you;"—and he could appeal to God, "O my Lord, judge if my ministry be not dear to me; but not so dear by many degrees as Christ my Lord."

All classes of people of Anwoth were objects of his care. He maintained a friendly intercourse with people of high rank, and

[1] M'Crie's Sketches.

[2] The oak pulpit out of which he preached is still preserved. The old church is in the shape of a barn, and could hold only 250 sitters. The years 1631 and 1633 are carved on some of the seats,—perhaps the seats of the Gordons, or other heritors. We may add,—while speaking of this old edifice where "the swallows building their nest," seemed to the exiled pastor "blessed birds,"—that the rusty key of that kirk door is now in the keeping of Mr. Rowan, Librarian to the New College, Edinburgh, sent to the college as a precious relic three years ago by a friend through Dr. Welsh.

many of his letters are addressed to such persons.—But the *herd boys* were not beneath his special attention. He writes of them when at Aberdeen, and exclaims, "Oh if I might but speak to thee or your herd boys, of my worthy Master." He had a heart for the young of all classes, so that he would say of two children of one of his friends, "I pray for them by name," and could thus take time to notice one, "Your daughter desires a Bible and a gown. I hope she shall use the Bible well, which if she do the gown is the better bestowed." He lamented over the few that cry "Hosanna" in their youth. "Christ is an *unknown* Christ to young ones, and therefore they seek him not because they know him not." He dealt with individual parishioners so closely and so personally as to be able to appeal to them that he had so done. He addresses one of them, Jean M'Millan: "I did what I could to put you within grips of Christ; I told you Christ's testament and latter-will plainly." He so carried them about with him (like the priest with the twelve tribes on his breast-plate,) that he could declare to Gordon of Cardoness, "Thoughts of your soul depart not from me in my sleep." "My soul was taken up when others were sleeping, how to have Christ betrothed with a bride in that part of the land," viz. Anwoth. He so prayed over them and for them, that he fears not to say, "*There* I wrestled with the angel and prevailed. Woods, trees, meadows, and hills, are my witnesses that I drew on a fair match betwixt Christ and Anwoth." It is related that on first coming to the parish, there was a piece of ground on Mossrobin farm, where on Sabbath afternoon the people used to play at foot-ball. On one occasion he repaired to the spot and pointed out their sin, calling on the objects round to be witness against them if they persevered, especially three large stones,[1] two of which still remain, and are called "*Rutherford's witnesses.*"

Once in Anwoth his labors were interrupted by a tertian fever which laid him aside for thirteen weeks. Even when well recovered, he could only preach on the Sabbaths; visiting and catechizing were at a stand. This was just before his wife's death in 1630, and he writes in the midst of it, "Welcome, welcome, cross of Christ, if Christ be with it." "An afflicted life looks very like the way that leads to the kingdom." And some years thereafter, when his mother, who resided with him six years after his first wife's death, was in a dangerous illness, he touchingly informs one of his correspondents, to whom he writes from Anwoth, "*My*

[1] Josh. xxiv. 27.

mother is weak, and I think shall leave me alone, but I am not alone, because *Christ's Father* is with me."

The manse of Anwoth had many visits of kind friends, who in Rutherford's fellowship felt that saying verified, "They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn."[1] The righteous compassed him about, because the Lord had dealt bountifully with him. His letters would be enough of themselves to show that his company was sought by the godly on all sides. But besides this evidence, we have notices of such visitors as his own brother George, at Kirkcudbright. This good man was a teacher in that town, and often repaired to Anwoth to take sweet counsel with Samuel; and then together, they often talked of and prayed for their only other brother James, an officer in the Dutch service, who had sympathy with their views, and in after days conveyed to Samuel the invitation to become Professor at Utrecht. Visits of those friends who resided near were not unfrequent, such as the Gordons, Viscount Kenmure and his lady, and in humbler life, Marion Macknaught. But at times Anwoth manse was lighted up by the glad visit of unexpected guests. There is a tradition that Archbishop Usher, passing through Galloway, turned aside on a Saturday to enjoy the congenial society of Rutherford. He came, however, in disguise, and being welcomed as a guest, took his place with the rest of the family when they were catechized, as was usual that evening. The stranger was asked, "How many commandments are there?" His reply was "*Eleven.*" The pastor corrected him; but the stranger maintained his position, quoting our Lord's words, "*A* NEW COMMANDMENT *I give unto you, that you love one another.*" They retired to rest, all interested in the stranger. Sabbath morning dawned, Rutherford arose and repaired for meditation to a walk that bordered on a thicket,[2] but was startled by hearing the voice of prayer,—prayer too, from the heart, and in behalf of the souls of the people that day to assemble. It was no other than the holy Archbishop Usher; and soon they came to an explanation, for Rutherford had begun to suspect he had "entertained angels unawares." With great mutual love they conversed together, and at the request of Rutherford, the Archbishop went up to the pulpit, conducted the usual service of the presbyterian pastor, and preached on "the New Commandment."

Scarcely less interesting is the record of one of those incidental

[1] Hos. xiv. 7.

[2] The place is still pointed out by tradition, as "Rutherford's Walk."

meetings that are often so refreshing to the saints in their pilgrimage. Rutherford had one day left home to go to the neighboring town of Kirkcudbright, the next day being a day of humiliation in that place. Having no doubt spent some time with his like-minded brother, he had turned his steps to the house of another friend, Provost Fullerton, whose wife was Marion Macknaught. While sitting with them a knock at the door was heard, and then a step on the threshold. It was worthy Mr. Blair, who, on his way from London to Port Patrick, had sought out some of his godly friends, that with them he might be refreshed ere he returned to Ireland. He told them, when seated, that "he had a desire to visit both Mr. Rutherford at Anwoth, and Marion Macknaught at Kirkcudbright, but not knowing how to accomplish both, he had prayed for direction at the parting of the road, and laid the bridle on the horse's neck. The horse took the way to Kirkcudbright, and there he found both the friends he so longed to see." It was a joyful and refreshing meeting on all sides.

In 1634 he attended the remarkable death-bed of Lord Kenmure, a narrative of which he published fifteen years after, in "The last heavenly speeches and glorious departure of John Viscount Kenmure."[1] The inroads of Episcopacy were at this time threatening to disquiet Anwoth. His own domestic afflictions were still affecting him; for he writes that same year, in referring to his wife's death many years before, "which wound is not yet fully healed and cured." About that time, too, there was a proposal never carried into effect to call him to Cramond, near Edinburgh.

Meanwhile he persevered in study as well as in labors, and with no common success. He had himself a metaphysical turn, as well as a great readiness in using the accumulated learning of other days. It might be instructive to inquire why it is that wherever Godliness is healthy and progressive we almost invariably find Learning in the Church of Christ attendant on it; while on the other hand, an illiterate state is attended sooner or later by decay of vital godliness. Not that all are learned in such

[1] Referring to the previous tempest that swept through Lord Kenmure's soul, the preface says that we may be taught that, "the wound of a wounded conscience is a most inexpressible terror; none can describe it but he who has tried and tasted the same. It impaireth the health, drieth up the blood, wasteth away the marrow, pineth away the flesh, consumeth away the bones, maketh pleasure painful, and shorteneth life. No wisdom can counsel it, no counsel can advise it, no advice can persuade it, no assuagement can cure it, no eloquence can move it, no power can overcome it, no spectre affray it, no enchanter charm it."

times; but there is always an *ingredient* of the kind among some of those whom the Lord is using. It may be that the energy of soul created by a revival leads on to the study of whatever is likely to be useful in the defence or propagation of the truth, whereas, when decay is progressing in a church, sloth and ease prevail, and are causes why theological learning is thought too heavy to be plodded through. With Samuel Rutherford and his contemporaries we find learning side by side with vital, and singularly deep godliness. Gillespie, Henderson, Blair, Dickson, and others, are well-known proofs. Circumstances led Rutherford in 1636 to publish his elaborate defences of grace against the Arminians, in Latin. Its title is "Exercitationes de Gratia." So highly was it esteemed at Amsterdam, where it was published, that a second edition was printed that very year; and invitations were addressed soon after to the author to come over and occupy the chair of Professor of Divinity in Utrecht. The university of Hardewyrk had already offered him both its chair of Divinity and Hebrew.

The contest for *Christ's Kingly office* had become hot and keen. To Rutherford it appeared no small matter. "I could wish many pounds added to my cross to know that by my suffering Christ was set forward in his *Kingly office* in this land." July 27, 1636, was a day that put his principles to the test. He was called before the High Commission Court, because of non-conformity to the acts of Episcopacy, and because of his work against the Arminians. The issue was not doubtful, though Lord Lorn made every exertion in his behalf,—they deprived him of his ministerial office, which he had exercised at Anwoth for a period of nine years, and banished him to Aberdeen. The next day, writing at evening on the subject, he tells of his sentence, and subjoins, "The honor that I have prayed for these sixteen years." He made up his mind to leave Anwoth at once, observing, with a submissiveness which we cannot help wondering at in the author of Lex Rex, "I purpose to obey the king, who has power over my body." [1] His only regret was lest this separation from his flock

[1] The following is his own account of this whole matter, as given in a speech delivered before the General Assembly of 29th Nov. 1638. When asked by the Moderator, "Were you not sent to Aberdeen by the High Commission?" his reply was, "Most true. I was sent in and summoned by the High Commission for diverse points the Bishop of Galloway libelled against me, and there was nothing at all proven against me, notwithstanding three several days I was before them; and the third day they had no other question to propose, but those wherewith they attempted me the first two days,—only the matter of non-conformity, which I stand by; and upon this

was a chastisement on him from the Lord, "Because I have not been so faithful in the end as I was in the two first years of my ministry, when sleep departed from mine eyes through care for Christ's lambs."

On leaving Anwoth he directed his steps by Irvine, spending a night there with his beloved friend David Dickson. What a night it would be! To hear these two in solemn converse! The one could not handle the harp so well as the other; for David Dickson could express his soul's weary longings and its consoling hopes in such strains as that which has made his name familiar in Scotland, "*O mother dear Jerusalem*," &c. But Rutherford, nevertheless, had so much of poetry and sublime enthusiasm in his soul, that any poet could sympathize with him to the full. Many of his lettters "from *Christ's palace* in Aberdeen" have strains of true poetry. What else is such an effusion as this, when rising on eagles' wings, he exclaims, "A land that has more than four summers in the year! What a singing life is there! There is not a dumb bird in all that large field, but all sing and breathe out heaven, joy, glory, dominion, to the High Prince of that new-found land. And verily the land is sweeter that He is the glory of that land." "O how sweet to be wholly Christ's, and wholly in Christ—to dwell in Immanuel's high and blessed land, and live in that sweetest air, where no wind bloweth but the breathings of the Holy Ghost—no sea nor floods flow but the pure water of life that floweth from under the throne and from the Lamb—no planting, but the tree of life that yieldeth twelve manner of fruits every month! What do we here but sin and suffer? O when shall the night be gone, the shadows flee away, and the morning of the long, long day, without cloud or night, dawn?

they sentenced me, after I declared by writ, the unlawfulness of that act, and that I durst not be answerable to the king to acknowledge that judicatory, because it was against the standing law of the kingdom. Notwithstanding of this, they proceeded against me, deprived me of my ministry in Anwoth, and confined me in Aberdeen. I watched on in Edinburgh, desiring the clerk to give me an extract of the sentence, but could not get it; and the reason why he shifted me was, because the Bishop of Galloway caused him to add a point to my sentence that I was not sentenced for, viz. that I should exercise no ministerial functions within the king's dominions. The clerk denied it was a point of my sentence, notwithstanding the Bishop of Galloway caused to add that point, and I could never have the extract of it, only I got a copy."—*Records of the Church of Scotland*, p. 150. Baillie says, "He was silenced and confined to Aberdeen for preaching against the Articles of Perth, and such things. It is true he refused to give the Chancellor or any of the Bishops their styles. They were animat also against him for taxing Cameron in his book, and more for his indiscreet railing at Jackson."—*Baill.* i. p. 8.

The Spirit and the bride say 'Come!' O when shall the Lamb's wife be ready, and the Bridegroom say, Come?" Whoever compares such breathings as this with David Dickson's hymn, will at once see how very congenial were their feelings and their hopes, and even their mode of expressing what they felt and hoped, though the one used prose and the other tried more memorable verse.

We follow Rutherford to Aberdeen, the capital of the North, whither he was accompanied by a deputation of his affectionate parishioners from Anwoth, in whose company he would forget the length and tediousness of the way. He arrived here in September, 1636. This town was at that time the stronghold of Episcopacy and Arminianism, and in it the state of religion was very low. "It consisted of Papists, and men of Gallio's naughty faith."[1] The clergy and doctors took the opportunity of Rutherford's arrival, to commence a series of attacks on the doctrines he held. But in disputation he foiled them; and when many began to feel drawn to his earnest dealings or private exhortations, there was a proposal made to remove him from the town. "So cold," writes he, "is northern love! But (added he) *Christ and I will bear it;*" deeply feeling his union to him who said to Saul, "why persecutest thou *me?*" Often on the streets,[2] he was pointed out as "the *Banished Minister;*" and hearing of this, he remarked, "I am not ashamed of my garland." He had visitors from Orkney, and from Caithness, to the great annoyance of his persecutors. Some blamed him for not being "*prudent enough,*" as we have seen men ready to do in the case of Dr. Kalley at Madeira in our day; but he replies, "*It is ordinary that that should be part of the cross of those who suffer for him.*" Still he enjoyed, in his solitude, occasional intercourse with some of the godly ones, among whom were Lady Pitsligo, Lady Burnet of Largs, Andrew Cant, and James Martin. His deepest affliction was separation from his flock at Anwoth. Nothing can exceed his tender sorrow over this flock.

It was a saying of his own, "Gold may be gold and bear the king's stamp upon it, when it is trampled upon by men." And

[1] Dr. James Sibbald, said to have been a man of great learning, was minister in one of the churches of what was then called New Aberdeen, and Rutherford was a hearer of his; he taught Arminianism, and Rutherford afterwards testified against him on this point from what he had himself listened to.—*Gordon's Scots Affair*, iii. 230.

[2] The impression of some readers might be that he was *in prison.* But he never was so. He was *in exile;* but the whole town was his prison, like Shimei confined to Jerusalem.

this was true of himself. But he came out of his trial unhurt; or rather, as his many letters from Aberdeen show, greatly increased in every grace.

He was part of two years closely confined to that town; but in 1638 public events had taken another turn. The Lord had stirred up the spirit of the people of Scotland, and the Covenant was again triumphant in the land. *Rutherford hastened back to Anwoth.* During his absence, "for six quarters of a year," say his parishioners, "no sound of the word of God was heard in our kirk." The swallows had made their nests undisturbed for two summers.

His letters do not refer to the proceedings of the Glasgow Assembly of 1638; still it is well known that he was no mere indifferent spectator to what then took place, but was member of several committees which at that time sat on the affairs of the Church; and Presbytery being fully restored by that Assembly, it was thought right that one so gifted should now be brought forward to a more important sphere. He was sent by the Church to several districts to promote the cause of reformation and the covenant: and at length, in spite of his reluctance, arising chiefly from love to his flock,—his rural flock at Anwoth,—he was constrained by the united opinion of his brethren to remove to the Professor's Chair in St. Andrew's, in 1639. He bargained to be allowed to preach regularly every Sabbath in his new sphere; for he could not endure silence when he might speak a word for his Lord. He seems to have preached, as occasion offered, in the parishes around, especially at Scoonie, where the village of Leven stands. His hands were necessarily filled with work in his new sphere; yet still he relaxed nothing of his diligence in study. Nor did he lose anything of former blessing. It was here the English merchant heard him preach so affectingly on the loveliness of Christ while such was his success as a Professor that "the university became a Lebanon out of which were taken cedars for building the house of God throughout the land."

In the year 1640, he married his second wife, "a woman," says one, "of such worth, that I never knew any among men exceed him, nor any among women exceed her. He who heard either of them pray or speak might have learnt to bemoan his own ignorance. Oh how many times I have been convinced by observing them, of the evil of unseriousness unto God, and unsavoriness in discourse." They had seven children; but only one

survived the father, a little daughter Agnes, who does not seem to have been a comfort to her godly mother.

In July, 1643, the Westminster Assembly sat; and to it he was sent up as one of the Commissioners from Scotland. There exists in MS. in the library of the Edinburgh University, a sketch of the Shorter Catechism, in Rutherford's handwriting, very much resembling the Catechism as it now stands, as if he had had the principal hand in drawing it up for the Assembly. He continued four years attending the sittings of this famous synod, and was of much use in their deliberations. So prominent a part did he take, that the great Milton has singled him out for attack in his lines, "On the new forcers of conscience, under the Long Parliament." Milton knew him only as an opponent of his sectarian and Independent principles, and so could scorn measures proposed by "Mere A. S. and Rutherford." But had he known the soul of the man, would not even Milton have found that there was a sublimity of thought and feeling in his adversary, that at times might approach his own lofty poesy? Yet how interesting, in any point of view, to find the devoted Pastor of Anwoth, on the streets of London, crossing the path of the greatest poet of modern times!

During his residence in London, several of his family died; yet amid the trials and bustle of that time he wrote "the Due Right of Presbytery," "Lex Rex," and "Trial and Triumph of Faith."

Returning home to St. Andrew's he resumed his labors both in the college and in the pulpit with all his former zeal.[1] He

[1] "1651, July 13.—The comm. was given at Scoonie. Mr. Alex. Moncrieff, m. there, did preach the Preparation Sermon, and on Monday morning, Mr. Sa. Rutherford did preach; his text at both occasions was Luke vii. 36 till 39 v. At this time was present, besides Mr. Sa. Rutherford, Mr. Ja. Guthrie, and Mr. David Bennet, Mr. Ephraim Melven, and Mr. William Oliphant, m. in Dumfermlin. Thither did resort many strangers, so that the throng was great. Mr. Ephraim, and Mr. D. Bennet both did sit within the pulpit while the minister had his sermon." "1654, Jan. 4.—Being Saturday, there was a Preparation Sermon for a Thanksgiving preached at Scoonie in Fyfe, for the continuance of the Gospel in the land, and for the spreading of it in some places of the Highlands in Scotland, where in some families two, and in some families one, began to call on God by prayer. Mr. Samuel Rutherford, M. in St. Andrew's, preached on Saturday; his text, Isai. xlix. 9, 10, 11, 12. On the Sabbath, Mr Alex. Moncrieff, M. then preached; his lecture, 1 Thess. i. ch.; his text, Coloss. i. 27. In the afternoon of the Sabbath, Mr. Samuel preached again upon his forementioned text. On Monday morning, Mr. Samuel had a Lecture on Psal. lxxxviii. He did read the whole Psalm. Observe, that on Saturday Mr. Samuel had this expression in his prayer after sermon, desiring that the Lord would rebuke Presbyteries and others that had taken the keys and the power in their hands, and keeped out, and would suffer none to enter (meaning in the ministry) but such as said as they said."—*Lamont's Diary.*

joined the Protesters in determinedly opposing the proceedings of the Commission of Assembly, who had censured such as protested against the admission to power of persons in the class of Malignants. His friend David Dickson keenly opposed him, and Mr. Blair also, though less violently. It was this controversy that made John Livingstone say in a letter to Blair,[1] "Your and Mr. D. Dickson's accession to these resolutions, is the saddest thing I have seen in my time. My wife and I have had more bitterness in this respect, these several months, than ever we had since we knew what bitterness meant." Rutherford wrote too violently on this matter; for all parties were greatly excited. Still he did not lose his brotherly love, the same brotherly love that led him to embrace Archbishop Usher as a fellow-believer. We may get a lesson for our times from his remarks on occasion of these bitter controversies. It is in 1646, that he writes; "It is hard when saints rejoice in the sufferings of saints, and redeemed ones hurt, and go nigh to hate, redeemed ones. For contempt of the communion of saints, we have need of new-born crosses scarce ever heard of before.—Our star-light hideth us from ourselves, and hideth us from one another, and Christ from us all." And then he subjoins, (and is he not borne out by the words of the Lord in John xvii. 22.) "A doubt it is if we shall have fully one heart, till we shall enjoy one heaven." The state of things lay heavy on his mind: "I am broken and wasted by the wrath that is upon this land."

Milton sings, "They also serve who only stand and wait;" and Rutherford was longing now for such service. He sometimes refers to this desire; he wishes for a quiet harbor in his latter days; only, adds he, "sailing is serving"—and he did delight in serving his Lord.

In 1660, his published work, "Lex Rex," was taken notice of by the government; for reasonable as it is in defence of the liberty of subjects, its spirit of freedom was intolerable to rulers who were gradually advancing to acts of cruelty and death. Indeed, it was so hateful to them, that they burnt it, first at Edinburgh by the hands of the hangman; and then some days after by the hands of the infamous Sharpe, under the windows of its author's College in St. Andrew's. He was next deposed from all his offices; and last of all summoned to answer at next Parliament on a charge of high treason. But the summons was too late. He was already on his death-bed, and on hearing of the summons,

[1] Wodrow Select Biographies.

calmly remarked, that he had got another summons before a superior Judge and Judicatory, and sent the message, "I behove to answer my first summons; and ere your day arrive, I will be where few kings and great folks come."

All that is told us of his death-bed is characteristic of the man. He said when asked, "What think ye now of Christ?"—"I shall live and adore him. Glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land." The same afternoon he said, "I shall sleep in Christ, and when I awake I shall be satisfied with his likeness." Once he cried aloud, "O for arms to embrace Him! O for a well-tuned harp!" This last expression he used more than once, as if already stretching out his hand to get his golden harp, and join the redeemed in their new song. He also said on another occasion, "I hear him saying to me, 'Come up hither.'" His little daughter, Agnes, only eleven years of age, stood by his bed-side; he looked on her, and said, "I have left her upon the Lord." Well might the man say so, who could so fully testify of his portion in the Lord, as a goodly heritage. To four of his brethren, who came to see him, he said, "My Lord and Master is chief of ten thousands of thousands. None is comparable to Him in heaven, or in earth. Dear brethren, do all for *Him*. Pray *for Christ*. Preach *for Christ*." He seemed to know the hour of his departure, not perhaps so surely as Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6, or Peter, 2 Peter i. 14, yet still in a manner that seems to indicate that the Lord draws very near his servants in that hour, and gives glimpses of what he is doing. On the last day of his life, in the afternoon, he said, "This night will close the door, and fasten my anchor within the veil, and I shall go away in a sleep by five o'clock in the morning." And so it was. He entered Immanuel's land at that very hour, March 20, 1661, at his house in St. Andrew's, and is now (as himself would have said) "sleeping in the bosom of the Almighty," till the Lord come. One of his dying sayings was, "There is nothing now between me and the resurrection but, 'This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.'" And Livingstone records that his last words were, "Glory, glory dwelleth in Immanuel's land!" —as if he had caught a glimpse of its mountain tops.[1]

Had he lived a few weeks, his might have been the cruel death

[1] "1661, Mar. 29, (a mistake for 20.) Mr. Samuel Rutherford, Principal of the New College in St. Andrew's, departed out of this life, at his dwelling-house there, and was interred the 30th of Mar. at the ordinary burial place of the said city. Some weeks before he had a daughter that departed out of this life likewise. Also, the said 30 of Mar. Mr. Andrew Honeyman's mother-in-law was interred likewise. They were both carried at one time to their long home."—*Lamont's Diary.*

endured by his friend James Guthrie, whom he had encouraged by his letters to steadfastness to the end. The vote which the Parliament passed when told that he was dying did him no dishonor. When they had voted that he should not die in the College, Lord Burleigh rose and said, "Ye cannot vote him out of heaven."

If ever there was any portrait of him, it is not now known. We are most familiar with the likeness of his soul. There is one expressive line in the epitaph on his tombstone, in the churchyard of the Chapel of St. Regulus:

> What tongue, what pen, or skill of men,
> Can famous Rutherford commend!
> His learning justly raised his fame,
> True greatness did adorn his name.
> He did converse with things above,
> *Acquainted with Immanuel's love.*

His memory was long cherished, and it is said that so great was the reverence which some of the godly had for this venerable man, that they requested to be buried near where his body was laid. It is also mentioned, that an old man in the parish of Crailing remembers the veneration entertained for him by the great-grandfather of the present Marquis of Lothian. This good Marquis used to lift his hat as he passed the spot where stood the cottage in which Samuel Rutherford was born.

His "Letters" have long been famous among the godly. The collector was godly Mr. M'Ward, who, as a student, being much beloved by Rutherford, went to the Westminster Assembly with him as his secretary. He was afterwards successor to Andrew Gray in Glasgow, and finally minister in Rotterdam. He published them with an enthusiastic recommendation; but seems sometimes to have given us erroneous readings. At least, there are occasionally expressions or clauses that are obscure, as they stand in print. The first letter is dated April 23, 1628; and onward from that date, we have occasional pieces up to the year of his death. It will be noticed, that at times, the pen of the ready writer ran on most rapidly. He has written many in one day, when his heart was overflowing. It was easy to write when the Lord was pouring on him the unction that teacheth all things. He would sometimes have written still more, but he had heard that people looked up to him and overpraised his letters. During his confinement at Aberdeen, he wrote about 220.

There are a few unpleasant expressions in the letters, which

are the sparks of a fancy that sought to appropriate everything to spiritual purposes; but as to extravagance in the thoughts conveyed, there is none. The extravagance alleged against them by some, is just that of Paul, when he spoke of knowing "the height and depth, length and breadth," of the love of Christ; or that of Solomon, when the Holy Ghost inspired him to write "The Song of Songs." Rather would we say of these letters, what Livingstone in a letter says of John Welsh's dying words, "O for a sweet fill of this fanatic humor!" In modern days, Richard Cecil has said of Rutherford: "He is one of my classics; he is a real original;" and in older times, Richard Baxter, some of whose theological leanings might have prejudiced him, if anything could, said of his letters: "Hold off the Bible, such a book the world never saw." They were long ago translated into Dutch, and of late years they have been translated into German. Both in these, and in his other writings, we see sufficient proof that had he cultivated literature as a pursuit, he might have stood high in the admiration of men.[1]

The letters often, by a few strokes, suggest very much that is edifying and impressive. There is something not easily forgotten in the words used to express the Church's indestructibleness in that letter, where he says, "the bush has been burning these five thousand years, and *no man yet saw the ashes of that fire*." How much truth is conveyed by that saying, "Losses for Christ are but goods given out in bank in Christ's hand." There is an ingenious use of Scripture that often delights the reader, as when he speaks of "the corn on the house-tops that never got the husbandman's prayer," or of "Him that counteth the basons and knives of his house, (Ezra i. 9, 10,) and bringeth them back safe to his second temple." But the general characteristics of his letters are still more worthy of attentive consideration.

[1] His other works bear the stamp of the same lofty soul. In his Treatise, "De Divina Providentia," the following paragraph occurs extolling the glory of Godhead wisdom. "Comparentur cum illa increata sapientia Dei Patris umbratiles scintillulæ creatæ gloriolæ quotquot nominis celebritate inclaruerunt. Delirat *Plato*. Mentitur *Aristoteles*. *Cicero* balbulit, hæsitat, nescit Latine loqui. *Demosthenes* mutus et elinguis obstepescit; virtutis viam ignorat *Seneca*, nihil canit *Homerus*,—male canit *Virgilius!* Accedant ad Christum qui virtutis gloria fulgent! *Aristides* virtutem mentitur. *Fabius* cespitat, a via justitiæ deviat. *Socrates* ne hoc quidem scit, se nihil scire. *Cato* levis et futilis est, *Solon* est mundi et voluptatum servus et mancipium, non legislator. *Pythagoras* nec sophos, nec philosophus est. *Bias* nec mundi nec inanis gloriæ contemptor. *Alexander Macedo* ignavus est," &c.

These Letters will ever be precious to :—

1. *All who are sensible of their own, and the Church's, decay and corruptions.* The wound and the cure are therein so fully opened out; self is exposed, even *spiritual self.* He will tell you, "There is as much need to watch over grace, as to watch over sin." He will show you God in Christ, to fill up the place usurped by *self.* The subtleties of sin, idols, snares, temptations, self-deceptions, are dragged into view from time to time. And what is better still, the cords of Christ are twined round the roots of these bitter plants, that they may be plucked up.

Nor is it less so in regard to corruption in public, and in the Church. We do not mean merely the open corruption of error, but the secret "gray hairs" of decay. How it suits our day to hear him cry, "*There is universal deadness on all that fear God. Oh where are the sometime quickening breathings, and influences from heaven that have refreshed his hidden ones!*" And then, how like our day when his complaint laments, in the name of the saints, "We are *half-satisfied with our witheredness;* nor have we so much of his strain who doth eight times breathe out that suit (Psa. 119,) Quicken me!" We live far from the well, and complain but dryly of our dryness."

2. *All who delight in the Surety's imputed righteousness.* If thoroughly aware of the body of sin in ourselves, we cannot but feel that we need a *person* in our stead,—the person of the God-man in the room of our guilty person. This is full salvation from guilt. "To us a Son is given;" not salvation only, but a Saviour. The person of Jesus is given us, "he gave *himself* for *us*."

These Letters are ever carrying us to the Surety and his righteousness. The eye never gets time to rest long on anything apart from Him and his righteousness. We are shown the deluge-waters undried up, in order to lead us into the ark again; "I had fainted, had not want and penury chased me to the storehouse of all," says he on one occasion.

3. *All who rejoice in the gospel of free grace.* Lord Kenmure once said to him, "Sin causeth me to be jealous of His love to such a man as I have been;" he replied, "Be jealous of yourself, my lord, but not of Jesus Christ." In his "Trial and Triumph of Faith," he remarks, "As holy walking is a duty coming from us, it is no ground of true peace. Believers often seek in themselves what they should seek in Christ." It is to the like effect

he says in a letter, "Your heart is not the compass that Christ saileth by," turning away his friends from looking inward, to look upon the heart of Jesus. And this is his meaning, when he thus lays the whole burden of salvation on the Lord, and leaves nothing for us but acceptance, "Take ease to thyself, and let him bear all." Then pointing us to the risen Saviour as our pledge of complete redemption, "Faith may dance, because Christ singeth;" "Faith *apprehendeth pardon*, but never payeth a penny for it." On his death-bed he said to his friends, "I disclaim all that ever God made me will or do, and I look upon it as defiled and imperfect." And so in his letters he will admit of no addition, or intermixture of other things; "The Gospel is like a small hair that hath no breadth, and will not cleave in two." He exhorts to assurance as being the way to be humbled very low before God: "Often in us, complaining is but a humble backbiting and traducing of Christ's new work in the soul." "Make meikle of assurance, for it keepeth your anchor fixed." He warns us, in his Trial and Triumph of Faith, "not to be too desirous of keen awakenings to chase us to Christ. Let Christ tutor me as he thinketh good. He has seven eyes: I have but one, and that too dim." In a similar strain he writes:—"The law shall never be my doomster, by Christ's grace; I shall find a sure enough doom in the gospel to humble and cast me down. *There cannot be a more humble soul than a believer. It is no pride in a drowning man to catch hold of a rock.*" How much truth there is here! Naaman never was humble in any degree, until he felt himself *completely healed* of his scaly leprosy: but truly he was humbled and humble then. And what one word is there, that suggests so many humbling thoughts as that word "*Grace?*"

4. *All who seek to grow in holiness.* The Holy Ghost delights to show us the glorious Godhead, in the face of Jesus. And this is a very frequent theme in these letters. He often seems to be standing in immovable contemplation of Christ, and so becoming holier and holier; "changed into the same image from glory to glory." "Take Christ for sanctification, as well as justification," is often his theme. And in him we see a man who seems to have sought for *holiness* as unceasingly and as eagerly as other men seek for *pardon and peace.* In him, "*holiness to the Lord*" seems written on every affection of the heart, and on every fresh-springing thought.

Fellowship with the living God is a distinguishing feature in

the, holiness given by the Holy Ghost, "access by one Spirit to the Father through him." It must be with the Living One we meet, and then the sympathies of a living heart are felt. Rutherford could sometimes say, "I have been so near Him, that I have said, 'I take instruments that this is the Lord.'" And he could from experience declare, "I dare avouch the saints know not the length and largeness of the sweet Earnest, and of the sweet green sheaves before the harvest, that might be had on this side of the water, *if we would take more pains.*" "I am every way in your case, as hard-hearted and dead as any man, but yet I speak to Christ through my sleep." All this is from the pen of a man who was a metaphysician, a controversialist, a leader in the Church, and learned in ancient lore. Why are there not such gracious, as well as great men now?

5. *All afflicted persons.* He abounds in rich words to such; indeed, here he had the very "tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to him that was weary." And with what tender sympathy does he speak, leading the mourner so gently to the heart of Jesus! He knew the heart of a stranger, for he had been a stranger. "Let no man after me slander Christ for his cross." Yes, says he, his most loved are often his most tried; "The lintel-stone and pillars of his New Jerusalem suffer more knocks of God's hammer and tools, than the common side-wall stones." Even as to reproach and calumny, "I love Christ's worst reproaches."

It was to Hugh M'Kail, he wrote, "Some have written me that I am possibly too joyful of the cross, but my joy overleapeth the cross,—it is bounded and terminated on Christ." And there it was he found a well of comfort never dry.

6. *All who love the Person of Christ.* Our age and country have been tempted to be satisfied with speculative, abstract doctrine. On the one hand, the orthodox have too often rested in the statements of our Catechisms and Confession; and, on the other, the "Election-doubters," (as Bunyan would have called them,) have gone about with their favorite dogma, that Christ died for all men, as if mere assent to a proposition would save the soul. Rutherford ever places the truth before us in a savory way—full of life and warmth. The person of Him who gave himself for his church is held up in all its attractiveness. With him, it is ever the Person as much as the work done; or rather, never the

one apart from the other. Like Paul, he would fain know *Him*, and the power of his resurrection.

Once when Lord Kenmure asked him, "What will Christ be like when he cometh?" his reply was, "*All lovely.*" And this is everywhere the favorite theme with him. At times he tells of his love. "His love surroundeth and surchargeth me." "If his love was not in heaven, I should be unwilling to go thither." But often he checks his pen to tell of *Christ himself.* "Welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet cross of Christ;"—then correcting his language,—"Welcome, fair, lovely, *royal King*, *with thine own cross.*" "Oh if I could doat as much upon *Himself* as I do upon his love." "I fear I make more of his love than of *Himself.*" How peculiar, and how true is this remark, "I see that in communion with Christ we may make more Gods than one," meaning, that we may be tempted to make the enjoyment itself our God. It was his habitual aim to pass through privileges, joys, even fellowship, to God himself; "I have casten this work upon Christ, to get me *himself.*" "I would be farther in upon Christ than at his joys—in, where love and mercy lodgeth —beside his heart." "He who sitteth on the throne is his lone a sufficient heaven." "Sure I am He is the far best half of heaven."

In one word, such was his soul's view of the living Person, that he writes, "Holiness is not Christ, nor the blossoms and flowers of the tree of life, nor the tree itself." He had found out the true fountain-head, and would direct all Zion's travellers thither. And let a man try this,—let the Holy Spirit lead a man to this *Person*, —and surely his experience will be, "None ever came up dry from David's well."

All who love that blessed hope, the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour. The more we love the person of Christ, the more ought we to love his appearing, and the more we cherish both feelings, the holier shall we become. Rutherford abounds in aspirations for that day; he is one who "looks for and hastens unto the coming of the day of God!" While in exile at Aberdeen in 1637, he writes, "O when will we meet! O how long is it to the dawning of the marriage day? O sweet Jesus, take wide steps! O my Lord, come over mountains at one stride! O my Beloved, flee as a roe or young hart upon the mountains of separation." Now and then he has the expression of an intense desire for the restoration of Israel to their Lord, and the fulness

of the Gentiles; but far oftener his desires go forth to his Lord himself. "O fairest among the sons of men, why stayest thou so long away? O heavens, move fast! O time, run, run, and hasten the marriage day!" To Lady Kenmure his words are, "The Lord hath told you what you should be doing till he come. 'Wait and hasten,' saith Peter, 'for the coming of the Lord.' Sigh and long for the dawning of that morning and the breaking of that day of the coming of the Son of Man, when the shadows shall flee away. Wait with the wearied night-watch for the breaking of the eastern sky." Saints who feel their exile and absence most are those who will most fervently love their Lord's appearing. It was thus with Daniel on the banks of Ulai, and John in Patmos; and Samuel Rutherford's most intense aspirations for that day are breathed out in Aberdeen.

His description of himself on one occasion is,—"A man often borne down and hungry, and waiting for the marriage supper of the Lamb." He is now gone to the "mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense;" and there he no doubt still wonders at the unopened treasures of Christ. But O for his insatiable desires Christward in our day! O for ten such men [1] in Scotland to stand in the gap, men who all day long find nothing but Christ to rest in, and whose very sleep is a pursuing after Christ in dreams, and who intensely desire to "awake with his likeness."

[1] Gen. xviii. 32.

RELIGIOUS LETTERS.

LETTER I.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WELL-BELOVED AND DEAR SISTER,—My love in Christ remembered—I have sent to you your daughter, Grizzel, with Robert Gordon, who came to fetch her. I am in good hopes that the seed of God is in her, as in one born of God, and God's seed will come to God's harvest. I have her promise that she will be Christ's, for I have told her that she may promise much in his worthy name; for he becometh caution[1] to his Father for all such as resolve and promise to serve him. I shall remember her to God. I trust that you will acquaint her with good company, and be diligent to know with whom she loveth to haunt.

Remember Zion, and our necessities. I bless your daughter from our Lord, and pray the Lord to give you joy and comfort of her. Remember my love to your husband, to William and Samuel, your sons.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, at all power in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, June 6th, 1624.

LETTER II.

TO A GENTLEWOMAN.

MISTRESS,—I beseech you to have me excused if the daily employments of my calling shall hinder me to see you, according as I would wish; for I dare not go abroad, since many of my people are sick, and the time of our communion[2] draweth near. But frequent the company of your worthy and honest-hearted pastor, Mr. Robert, to whom the Lord hath given the tongue of the learned, to minister a word in due season to the weary. Remember me to him, and to your husband.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Your affectionate Friend, S. R.

[1] Surety.

[2] Dispensation of the Lord's Supper.

LETTER III.

TO A CHRISTIAN GENTLEWOMAN.

MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered to you:—I was indeed sorrowful at my departure from you, especially since ye were in such heaviness after your daughter's death; yet I do persuade myself that ye know that the weightiest end of the cross of Christ, which is laid upon you, lieth upon your strong Saviour; for Isaiah saith, (chap. lxiii. 9,) "In all your afflictions he is afflicted." O blessed Second, who suffereth with you! and glad may your soul be, even to walk in the fiery furnace, with One like unto the Son of Man, who is also the Son of God. Courage! up your heart! when ye do tire, he will bear both you and your burden. (Ps. lv. 22.) Yet a little while, and ye shall see the salvation of God.

Remember of what age your daughter was; so long was your lease of her. If she was eighteen, nineteen, or twenty years old I know not; but sure I am, seeing her term was come, and your lease run out, ye can no more justly quarrel with your great Superior for taking his own, at his just term-day, than a poor farmer can complain that his master taketh a portion of his own land to himself when his lease is expired. Good mistress, if ye would not be content that Christ should hold from you the heavenly inheritance, which is made yours by his death, shall not that same Christ think hardly of you, if you refuse to give him your daughter willingly, who is a part of his inheritance and conquest?[1] I pray the Lord to give you all your own, and to grace you with patience, to give God his also. He is an ill debtor who payeth that which he hath borrowed with a grudge. Indeed that long loan of such a good daughter, an heir of grace, a member of Christ, (as I believe,) deserveth more thanks at your Creditor's hands, than that ye should gloom[2] and murmur when he craveth but his own. I believe ye would judge them to be but thankless neighbors who would pay you a sum of money after this manner. But what? Do ye think her lost, when she is but sleeping in the bosom of the Almighty? Think not her absent who is in such a friend's house. Is she lost to you, who is found to Christ? If she were with a dear friend, although ye should never see her again, your care of her would be but small. Oh, now, is she not with a dear Friend, and gone higher, upon a certain hope that ye shall, in the Resurrection, see her again, when (be ye sure) she shall neither be hectic, nor consumed in body? Ye would be sorry either to be, or be esteemed, an atheist; and yet not I, but the Apostle, (1 Thess. iv. 13,) thinketh those to be hopeless atheists who mourn excessively for the dead. But this is not a challenge[3] on my part; I do speak this only fearing your weakness, for your

[1] Acquisition by purchase or industry.
[2] Let your countenance fall.
[3] Accusation.

daughter was a part of yourself; and, therefore, nature in you being, as it were, cut and halved, will indeed be grieved: but we have to rejoice, that when a part of you is on earth, a great part of you is glorified in Heaven. Follow her, but envy her not; for, indeed, it is self-love in us that maketh us mourn for them that die in the Lord. Why? Because for them we cannot mourn, since they are never happy till they be dead; therefore, we mourn for our own private respect. Take heed, then, that in showing your affection in mourning for your daughter, ye be not, out of self-affection, mourning for yourself. Consider what the Lord is doing in it. Your daughter is plucked out of the fire, and she resteth from her labors; and your Lord in that is trying you, and casting you into the fire. Go through all fires to your rest: and now remember that the eye of God is upon you, beholding your patience and faith; he delighteth to see you in the burning bush and not consumed; and he is gladly content that such a weak woman as ye should send Satan away, frustrated of his design. Now honor God, and shame the strong Roaring Lion, when ye seem weakest. Should such an one as ye faint in the day of adversity? Call to mind the days of old: the Lord yet liveth: trust in him, although he should slay you. Faith is exceedingly charitable, and believeth no evil of God. Now is the Lord laying in the one scale of the balance your making conscience of submission to his gracious will: and, in the other, your affection and love to your daughter—which of the two will ye then choose to satisfy? Be wise, then; and, as I trust that ye love Christ better than a sinful woman, pass by your daughter, and kiss the Lord's rod. Men do lop the branches off their trees round about, to the end they may grow up high and tall; the Lord hath, in this way, lopped your branch, in taking from you many children, to the end ye should grow upward, like one of the Lord's cedars, setting your heart above, where Christ is at the right hand of the Father. What is next, but that your Lord cut down the stock after he hath cut the branches? Prepare yourself; ye are nearer your daughter this day than you were yesterday; while ye prodigally spend time in mourning for her, ye are speedily posting after her. Run your race with patience; let God have his own, and ask of him, instead of your daughter, whom he hath taken from you, the daughter of faith, which is patience; and in patience possess your soul. Lift up your head; ye do not know how near your redemption doth draw.

Thus, recommending you to the Lord, who is able to establish you, I rest,

Your loving and affectionate Friend,

In the Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, April 23, 1628.

LETTER IV.

TO THE VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.[1]

MADAM,—All dutiful obedience in the Lord remembered—I have heard of your Ladyship's infirmity and sickness with grief; yet I trust that ye have learned to say, "It is the Lord, let him do whatsoever seemeth good in his eyes." It is now many years since the apostate angels made a question, whether their will or the will of their Creator should be done; and since that time, froward mankind hath always, in that same suit of law, compeared[2] to plead with them against God, in daily repining against his will: but the Lord, being both party and judge, hath obtained a decreet,[3] and saith, (Isaiah xlvi. 10,) "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." It is then best for us, in the obedience of faith, and in a holy submission, to give that to God which the law of his almighty and just power will have of us. Therefore, madam, your Lord willeth you, in all states of life, to say, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven;" and herein shall ye have comfort, that He, who seeth perfectly through all your evils, and knoweth the frame and constitution of your nature, and what is most healthful for your soul, holdeth every cup of affliction to your head with his own gracious hand. Never believe that your tender-hearted Saviour, who knoweth the strength of your stomach, will mix that cup with one dram-weight of poison. Drink then with the patience of the saints; and the God of patience bless your physic.

I have heard your Ladyship complain of deadness, and want of the bestirring power of the life of God; but, courage! He, who walked in the garden, and made a noise that made Adam hear his voice, will also, at some times, walk in your soul, and make you hear a more sweet word—yet ye will not always hear the noise and the din of his feet when he walketh. Ye are, at such a time, like Jacob mourning at the supposed death of Joseph, when Joseph was living. The new creature, the image of the Second Adam, is living in you; and yet ye are mourning at the supposed death of the life of Christ in you. Ephraim is bemoaning and mourning, (Jer. xxxi. 18,) when he thinketh God is far off, and heareth not; and yet God is like the Bridegroom, (Cant. ii.,) standing only behind a thin wall, and laying to his ear; for he saith himself, (ver. 18,) "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself." I have good confidence, madam, that Christ Jesus, whom your soul, through forests and mountains, is seeking, is within you: and yet I speak not this to lay a pillow under your head, or to dissuade you from a holy fear of the loss of your

[1] Lady Jean, third daughter of Archibald Campbell, seventh Earl of Argyll, and the sister of the Martyr Archibald, Marquis of Argyll.

[2] Appeared as in court. [3] Sentence.

Christ, or of provoking and stirring up the Beloved before he please, by sin. I know that in spiritual confidence, the Devil will come in, as in all other good works, and cry, "Half mine!" and so endeavor to bring you under a fearful sleep, till He, whom your soul loveth, be departed from the door, and have left off knocking; and, therefore, here the Spirit of God must hold your soul's feet in the golden mid-line, betwixt confident resting in the arms of Christ, and presumptuous and drowsy sleeping in the bed of fleshly security. Therefore, worthy Lady, so count little of yourself, because of your own wretchedness and sinful drowsiness, that ye count not also little of God in the course of his unchangeable mercy; for there be many Christians, most like unto young sailors, who think the shore and the whole land do moye, when the ship and they themselves are moved; just so, not a few do imagine that God moveth, and saileth, and changeth places, because their giddy souls are under sail, and subject to alteration, to ebbing and flowing—but the foundation of the Lord abideth sure. God knoweth that ye are his own. Wrestle, fight, go forward, watch, fear, believe, pray; and then ye have all the infallible symptoms of one of the elect of Christ within you.

Ye have now, madam, a sickness before you; and also after that, a death: gather then now food for the journey. God give you eyes to see through sickness and death, and to see something beyond death. I doubt not that if Hell were betwixt you and Christ, as a river which ye behooved to cross ere ye could come at him, but ye would willingly put in your foot, and make through to be at him, upon hope that he would come in himself into the deepest of the river, and lend you his hand. Now I believe that your hell is dried up, and that ye have only these two shallow brooks, sickness and death, to pass through; and ye have also a promise that Christ will do more than meet you, even that he will come himself and go with you foot for foot, yea, and bear you in his arms. Oh then! oh then! for the joy that is set before you, for the love of the Man (who is also God over all, blessed forever,) that is standing upon the shore to welcome you; run your race with patience. The Lord go with you. Your Lord will not have you, nor any of his servants, to exchange for the worse. Death, in itself, includeth both the death of the soul and the death of the body; but to God's children the bounds and the limits of death are abridged, and drawn into a more narrow compass: so that when ye die, a piece of death shall only seize upon you, or the least part of you shall die, and that is, the dissolution of the body: for in Christ ye are delivered from the Second Death; and, therefore, as one born of God, commit not sin, (although ye cannot live and not sin,) and that serpent shall but eat your earthly part—as for your soul, it is above the law of death. But it is fearful and dangerous to be a debtor and a servant to sin; for the count of sin ye will not be able to make good before God, except Christ both count and pay for you.

I trust also, madam, that ye will be careful to present to the Lord the present estate of this decaying Kirk;[1] for what shall be concluded in Parliament anent[2] her, the Lord knoweth. Sure I am that the decree of a most fearful Parliament in Heaven is at the very point of coming forth, because of the sins of the land; for we have cast away the law of the Lord, and despised the words of the Holy One of Israel, (Isaiah v. 24.) "Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the streets, and equity cannot enter." (Isaiah lix. 14.) Lo, the Prophet, as if he had seen us and our Kirk,[1] resembleth justice to be handled as an enemy, holden out at the ports of our city, so is she banished; and truth to a person sickly and diseased, fallen down in a deadly swooning fit in the streets before he can come to an house. The priests have caused many to stumble at the Law, and have corrupted the Covenant of Levi, (Mal. ii. 8.) But what will they do in the end? (Jer. v. 31.) Therefore give the Lord no rest for Zion.

Stir up your husband, your brother, and all with whom ye are in favor and credit, to stand upon the Lord's side against Baal. I have good hope that your husband loveth the peace and prosperity of Zion. The peace of God be upon him for his intended courses anent[2] the establishment of a powerful ministry in this land.

Thus, not willing to weary your Ladyship farther, I commend you, now and always, to the grace and mercy of that God who is able to keep you that ye fall not. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Your Ladyship's servant, at all dutiful obedience in Christ,

Anwoth, July 27, 1628. S. R.

LETTER V.

TO THE ELECT AND NOBLE LADY, MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Saluting your Ladyship with grace and mercy from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ—I was sorry at my departure, leaving your Ladyship in grief; and should still be grieved at it, if I were not assured that ye have One with you in the furnace, whose visage is like unto the Son of God. I am glad that ye have been acquainted, from your youth, with the wrestlings of God; and that ye get scarce liberty to swallow down your spittle, being casten[3] from furnace to furnace, knowing that if ye were not dear to God, and if your health did not require so much of him, he would not spend so much physic upon you. All the brethren and sisters of Christ must be conformed to his image and copy in suffering, (Rom. viii.,) and some do more vively[4] resemble the copy than others. Think, madam, that it is a part of your

[1] Church. [2] Concerning.
[3] Tossed. [4] In a lively manner.

glory to be enrolled among those whom one of the elders (Rev. vii. 14,) pointed out to John, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Behold your Forerunner going out of the world, all in a lake of blood; and it is not ill to die as he did. Fulfil, with joy, the remnant of the grounds and remainders of the afflictions of Christ in your body.

Ye have lost a child—nay, she is not lost to you, who is found to Christ; she is not sent away, but only sent before; like unto a star, which, going out of our sight, doth not die and vanish, but shineth in another hemisphere; ye see her not, yet she doth shine in another country. If her glass was but a short hour, what she wanteth of time, that she hath gotten of eternity; and ye have to rejoice that ye have now some plenishing[1] up in Heaven. Build your nest upon no tree here; for ye see God hath sold the forest to death; and every tree, whereupon we would rest, is ready to be cut down, to the end that we might flee[2] and mount up, and build upon the Rock, and dwell in the holes of the Rock. What ye love besides Jesus, your husband, is an adulterous lover: now it is God's special blessing to Judah, that he will not let her find her paths in following her strange lovers. (Hos. ii. 6,) "Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths." (Ver. 7,) "And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them." Oh thrice happy Judah, when God buildeth a double-stone wall betwixt her and the fire of Hell! The world, and the things of the world, madam, is the lover that ye naturally affect, beside your own husband, Christ. The hedge of thorns, and the wall which God buildeth in your way, to hinder you from this lover, is the thorny hedge of daily grief, loss of children, weakness of body, iniquity of the time, uncertainty of estate, lack of wordly comfort, fear of God's anger for old unrepented-of sins. What lose ye if God twist and plait the hedge daily thicker? God be blessed! the Lord will not let you find your paths. Return to your first husband. Do not weary, neither think that death walketh toward you with a slow pace. Ye must be riper ere ye be shaken; your days are no longer than Job's, that were swifter than a post, and passed away as the ships of desire, and as the eagle that hasteth for the prey. (Job ix. 25, 26,) There is less sand in your glass now than there was yesterday; this span-length of ever-posting time will soon be ended; but the greater is the mercy of God, the more years ye get to advise upon what terms, and upon what conditions, ye cast your soul into the huge gulf of never-ending eternity. The Lord hath told you what ye should be doing till he come: wait and hasten, saith Peter, for the coming of our Lord. All is night that is here, in respect of ignorance and daily ensuing troubles, one always making way to another, as the ninth wave of the sea to the tenth; therefore, sigh and long for the dawning

[1] Furniture. [2] Fly.

of that morning, and the breaking of that day of the coming of the Son of Man, when the shadows shall flee away. Persuade yourself that the King is coming. Read his letter sent before him, (Rev. iii. 11,) "Behold, I come quickly." Wait, with the wearied night-watch, for the breaking of the eastern sky, and think that ye have not a morrow; as the wise father said, who, being invited against to-morrow to dine with his friends, answered, "These many days I have had no morrow at all." I am loath to weary you. Show yourself a Christian, by suffering without murmuring, for which sin fourteen thousand and seven hundred were slain. (Numb. xvi. 49.) In patience possess your soul—they lose nothing who gain Christ.

Thus, remembering my brother's and my wife's humble service to your Ladyship, I commend you to the mercy and grace of our Lord Jesus, assuring you that your day is coming, and that God's mercy is abiding you.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in the Lord Jesus, at all dutiful obedience, S. R.

Anwoth, Jan. 15, 1629.

LETTER VI.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—Saluting you in Jesus Christ—to my grief I must bid you (it may be) forever farewell, on paper, having small assurance ever to see your face again till the last general assembly, where the whole Church universal shall meet; yet promising, by his grace, to present your Ladyship, and your burdens to Him, who is able to save you, and to give you an inheritance with the saints, after a more special manner than ever I have done before.

Ye are going to a country where the Sun of righteousness in the Gospel shineth not so clearly as in this kingdom; but if ye would know where He, whom your soul loveth, doth rest, and where he feedeth at the noon-tide of the day, wherever ye be, get ye forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed yourself beside the shepherds' tents, (Cant. i. 7, 8,) that is, ask for some of the watchmen of the Lord's city, who will tell you truly, and will not lie, where you shall find Him, whom your soul loveth. I trust that ye are so betrothed in marriage to the true Christ, that ye will not give your love to any false Christ. Ye know not how soon your marriage-day will come; nay, is not eternity hard upon you? It were time, then, that ye had your wedding-garment in readiness. Be not sleeping at your Lord's coming: I pray God that ye may be upon your feet standing when he knocketh. Be not discouraged to go from this country to another part of the Lord's earth—the earth is his, and the fulness thereof. (Psalm xxiv. 1.) This is the Lord's lower house; and, while we are lodged here, we have

no assurance to lie ever in one chamber, but must be content to remove from one corner of our Lord's nether-house to another, resting in hope that, when we come up to the Lord's upper city, Jerusalem that is above, we shall remove no more; because then we shall be at home. And, go whithersoever ye will, if your Lord go with you, ye are at home; and your lodging is ever taken before night, so long as He, who is Israel's dwelling-house, is your home. (Psalm xc. 1.) Believe me, madam, my mind is, that ye are well lodged, and that in your house there are fair ease-rooms[1] and pleasant lights, if ye can in faith lean down your head upon the breast of Jesus Christ; and till this be, ye will never get a sound sleep. Jesus, Jesus, be your shadow and your covering—it is a sweet soul-sleep to lie in the arms of Christ, for his breath is very sweet.

Pray for poor friendless Zion! Alas! no man will speak for her now, although at home, in her own country, she hath good friends, her husband, Christ, and his Father, her father-in-law. Beseech your husband to be a friend to Zion, and to pray for her.

I have received many and divers dashes and heavy strokes since the Lord called me to the ministry; but, indeed, I esteem your departure from amongst us the weightiest: but I perceive that God will have us to be deprived of whatsoever we idolize, that he may have his own room. I see exceedingly small fruit of my ministry, and would be glad to know of one soul to be my crown and rejoicing in the day of Christ. Though I spend my strength in vain, yet my labor is with my God. (Isaiah xlix. 4.) I wish and pray that the Lord would harden my face against all, and make me to learn to go with my face against a storm.

Again, I commend you, body and spirit, to Him, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins, in his own blood. Grace, grace, grace, forever, be with you. Pray, pray continually.

Your Ladyship's, at all dutiful obedience in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, Sept. 14, 1629.

LETTER VII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Loving and Dear Sister,—If ever you would pleasure me, entreat the Lord for me, now when I am so comfortless, and so full of heaviness, that I am not able to stand under the burden any longer. The Almighty hath doubled his stripes upon me; for my wife is so sore tormented, night and day, that I have wondered why the Lord tarrieth so long. My life is bitter unto me, and I fear that the Lord be my contrary party. It is (I now know by experience) hard to keep sight of God in a storm, especially when he hideth himself for the trial of his children. If he would

[1] Rooms for repose.

be pleased to remove his hand, I have a purpose to seek him more than I have done. Happy are they that can win away[1] with their soul: I am afraid of his judgments. I bless my God, that there is a death and a heaven. I would weary to begin again to be a Christian, so bitter is it to drink of the cup that Christ drank of, if I knew not that there is no poison in it. God give us not of it whill[2] we vomit again, for we have sick souls when God's physic worketh not. Pray that God would not lead my wife into temptation. Wo[3] is my heart that I have done so little against the kingdom of Satan in my calling; for he would fain attempt to make me blaspheme God in his face. I believe, I believe, in the strength of Him, who hath put me into his work, that he shall fail in that which he seeketh. I have comfort in this, that my Captain, Christ, hath said I must fight and overcome the world, (John xvi. 33,) and with a weak, spoiled, weaponless devil, (John xiv. 30.) "The Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me."

Desire Mr. Robert to remember me, if he love me. Grace, grace be with you, and all yours. Remember Zion.

There is a letter procured from the King, by Mr. John Maxwell, to urge conformity, to give the Communion at Christmas, in Edinburgh. Hold fast that which ye have, that no man take the crown from you.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

Anwoth, Nov. 17, 1629.

LETTER VIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—I have longed exceedingly to hear of your life and health, and growth in the grace of God. I lacked the opportunity of a bearer, in respect I did not understand of the hasty departure of the last, by whom I might have saluted your Ladyship; and, therefore, I could not write before this time. I entreat you, madam, to let me have two lines from you, concerning your present condition. I know that ye are in grief and heaviness; and if it were not so, ye might be afraid, because then your way should not be so like the way that our Lord saith leadeth to the New Jerusalem. Sure I am that, if ye knew what was before you, or if ye saw but some glances of it, ye would with gladness swim through the present floods of sorrow, spreading forth your arms out of desire to be at land. If God has given you the earnest of the Spirit, as part of payment of God's principal sum, ye have to rejoice; for our Lord will not lose his earnest, neither will he go back nor repent him of the bargain. If ye find, at some time, a longing to see God, joy in the assurance of that sight, howbeit that feast be

[1] Escape. [2] Till. [3] Grieved.

but like the Passover, that cometh about only once a year. Peace of conscience, liberty of prayer, the doors of God's treasure casten up[1] to the soul, and a clear sight of himself looking out, and saying, with a smiling countenance, "Welcome to me, afflicted soul," this is the earnest that he giveth sometimes, and which maketh glad the heart, and is an evidence that the bargain will hold.

But to the end that ye may get this earnest, it were good to come oft into terms of speech with God, both in prayer and hearing of the word; for this is the house-of-wine, where ye meet with your Well-beloved. Here it is where he kisseth you with the kisses of his mouth, and where ye feel the smell of his garments; and they have indeed a most fragrant and glorious smell. Ye must, I say, wait upon him, and be often communing with Him, whose lips are as lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, and by the moving whereof he will assuage your grief; for the Christ, that saveth you, is a speaking Christ; the Church knoweth him (Cant. ii.) by his voice, and can discern his voice among a thousand. I say this, to the end that ye should not love those masks of Anti-christian ceremonies, which the Church, where ye are for a time, hath casten[2] over the Christ, whom your soul loveth. This is to set before you a dumb Christ. But when our Lord cometh, he speaketh to the heart in the simplicity of the Gospel.

I have neither tongue nor pen, to express to you the happiness of such as are in Christ. When ye have sold all that ye have, and bought the field wherein this pearl is, ye will think it no bad market: for if ye be in him, all his is yours; and ye are in him; "therefore, because he liveth, ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) And what is that else, but as if the Son had said, "I will not have Heaven, except my redeemed ones be with me? they and I cannot live asunder—abide in me and I in you." (John xv. 4.) Oh sweet communion, when Christ and we are through other,[3] and are no longer two! "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my glory, that thou hast given me." (John xvii. 24.) Amen: dear Jesus, let it be according to that word.

I wonder that ever your heart should be casten[4] down, if ye believe this truth. And they are not worthy of Jesus Christ, who will not suffer forty years' trouble for him, since they have such glorious promises. But we fools believe those promises as the man that read Plato's writings concerning the immortality of the soul. So long as the book was in his hand, he believed that all was true, and that the soul could not die; but so soon as he laid by the book, presently he began to imagine, that the soul is but a smoke or airy vapor, that perisheth with the expiring of the breath: so we at starts do assent to the sweet and precious promises; but laying aside God's book, we begin to call all in question. It is faith, indeed, to believe without a pledge, and to hold the heart constant at this work, and when we doubt, to run to the Law and

[1] Thrown open. [2] Thrown. [3] Promiscuously united. [4] Cast.

to the Testimony, and stay there. Madam, hold you here. Here is your Father's testament, read it: in it he hath left to you remission of sins and life everlasting. If all that ye have here be crosses and troubles, downcastings, frequent desertions, and departure of the Lord, who is suiting[1] you in marriage, courage! He, who is wooer and suiter, should not be an household-man with you, till ye and he come up to his Father's house together. He purposeth to do you good at your latter end, (Deut. viii. 16,) and to give you rest from the days of adversity. (Psalm xciv. 13.) It is good to bear the yoke of God in your youth. (Lam. iii. 27.) Turn in to your strong-hold as a prisoner of hope. (Zec. ix. 12.) "For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (Hab. ii. 3.) Hear himself saying, (Isa. xxvi. 20,) "Come my people,"—rejoice, he calleth on you—"Enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself, as it were for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast." Believe then, "believe and be saved." Think it not hard, if ye get not your will, nor your delights in this life; God will have you to rejoice in nothing but himself. God forbid that ye should rejoice in anything but in the cross of Christ. (Gal. vi. 16.)

Our Church, madam, is decaying; she is like Ephraim's cake, and gray hairs are here and there upon her, and she knoweth it not. (Hos. vii. 9.) She is old and gray-headed, near the grave, and no man layeth it to heart—her wine is sour, and is corrupted. Now if the wife of Phineas did live, she might travail in birth and die, to see the Ark of God taken, and the glory departing from our Israel—the power and life of religion is away. "Wo unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out." (Jer. vi. 4.) Madam, Zion is the ship wherein ye are carried to Canaan. If she suffer shipwreck, ye will be casten[2] overboard, upon death and life, to swim to land upon broken boards. It were time for us, by prayer, to put upon[3] our Master-pilot, Jesus, and to cry, "Master, save us, we perish!"

Grace, grace be with you. We would think it a blessing to our Kirk[4] to see you here; but our sins withhold good things from us. The great Messenger of the covenant preserve you, in body and in spirit.

Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

Anwoth, Feb. 1, 1630.

LETTER IX.

TO THE LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you—I received your Ladyship's letter, in the which I perceive that your

[1] Wooing. [2] Cast. [3] Importune. [4] Church.

case in this world smelleth of worship and communion with the Son of God in his sufferings. Ye cannot, ye must not, have a more pleasant or more easy condition here, than He had, who, through afflictions, was made perfect. (Heb. ii. 10.) We may indeed think, cannot God bring us to Heaven with ease and prosperity? Who doubteth that he can? But his infinite wisdom thinketh, and decreeth the contrary; and we cannot see a reason for it, yet he hath a most just reason. We never with our eyes saw our own soul, yet we have a soul; we see many rivers, but we know not their first spring and original fountain, yet they have a beginning. Madam, when ye are come to the other side the water, and have set down your foot on the shore of glorious eternity, and look back again to the waters, and to your wearisome journey, and shall see, in that clear glass of endless glory, nearer to the bottom of God's wisdom, ye shall, then, be forced to say, "If God had done otherwise with me than he hath done, I had never come to the enjoying of this crown of glory." It is your part now to believe, and suffer, and hope, and wait on: for I protest, in the presence of that all-discerning Eye, who knoweth what I write, and what I think, that I would not want the sweet experience of the consolations of God, for all the bitterness of affliction: nay, whether God come to his children with a rod or a crown, if he come himself with it, it is well. Welcome, welcome Jesus, what way soever thou comest, if we can get a sight of thee. And sure I am that it is better to be sick, providing Christ come to the bed-side, and draw by the curtains, and say, "Courage! I am thy salvation!" than to enjoy health, being lusty and strong, and never to be visited of God.

Worthy and dear Lady, in the strength of Christ, fight and overcome. Ye are now your lone;[1] but ye may have, for the seeking, Three always in your company, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—I trust they are near you. Ye are now deprived of the comfort of a lively ministry, so was Israel in their captivity: yet hear God's promise to them, (Ez. xi. 16,) "Therefore say, thus saith the Lord God, 'Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary, in the countries where they shall come.'" Behold a sanctuary! for a sanctuary God himself, in the place and room of the Temple of Jerusalem. I trust in God that, carrying this temple about with you, ye shall see Jehovah's beauty in his house.

We are in great fears of a great and fearful trial to come upon the Kirk[2] of God; for those, who would build their houses and nests on the ashes of mourning Jerusalem, have drawn our King upon hard and dangerous conclusions, against such as are termed Puritans, for the rooting of them out. Our prelates—the Lord take the keys of his house from these bastard porters!—assure us that for such as will not conform, there is nothing but imprison-

[1] By yourself alone. [2] Church.

ment and deprivation. The Spouse of Jesus shall ever be in the fire; but I trust in my God that she shall not be consumed, because of the good-will of Him, who dwelleth in the bush, for he dwelleth in it with good-will. All sorts of crying sins, without controlment, abound in our land. The glory of the Lord is departing from Israel, and the Lord is looking back over his shoulder to see if any will say, "Lord! tarry," and no man requesteth him to stay. Corrupt and false doctrine is openly preached by the idol-shepherds of the land. For myself I have daily griefs, through the disobedience unto, and contempt of the word of God.

I was summoned before the High Commission by a profligate person in this Parish, convicted of incest. In the business, Mr. Alexander Colville, for respect to your Ladyship, was my great friend, and wrote a most kind letter to me.—The Lord give him mercy in that day. Upon the day of my compearance,[1] the sea, and winds, refused to give passage to the Bishop of St. Andrew's. I entreat your Ladyship, to thank Mr. Alexander Colville, with two lines of a letter.

My wife now, after a long disease and torment, for the space of a year and a month, is departed this life;—the Lord hath done it; blessed be his name. I have been diseased of a fever tertian for the space of thirteen weeks, and am yet in that sickness, so that I preach but once on the Sabbath with great difficulty. I am not able either to visit, or examine the congregation.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience, S. R.

Anwoth, June 26th, 1630.

LETTER X.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved and Dear Sister,—My love, in the Lord Jesus, remembered—I understand that you are still under the Lord's visitation, in your former business with your enemies, which is God's dealing. For, till He take his children out of the furnace, who knoweth how long they should be tried, there is no deliverance; but after God's highest and fullest tide, that the sea of trouble is gone over the souls of his children, then cometh the gracious long-hoped-for ebbing, and drying up of the waters. Dear sister, do not faint; the wicked may hold the bitter cup to your head, but God mixeth it, and there is no poison in it; they strike, but God moveth the rod; Shimei curseth, but it is because the Lord biddeth him.

I tell you, and I have it from Him before whom I stand for God's people, that there is a decreet[2] given out in the Great Court of the Highest Heavens, that your present troubles shall be dis-

[1] Appearance, in obedience to a legal citation. [2] Sentence.

persed as the morning cloud, and God will bring forth your righteousness as the light of the noontide of the day. Let me entreat you in Christ's name, to keep a good conscience in your proceedings in that matter, and beware of yourself—yourself is a more dangerous enemy than I, or any without you. Innocence, and an upright cause, is a good advocate before God, and will plead for you, and shall win your cause; and count much of your Master's approbation, and his smiling. He is now as the king that is gone to a far country. God seemeth to be from home, (if I may say so,) yet he seeth the ill servants, who say, "Our Master deferreth his coming," and so strike their fellow-servants. But patience, my beloved, Christ, the King, is coming home; the evening is at hand, and he will ask an account of his servants. Make a fair clear count to him. So carry yourself, as at night you may say, "Master, I have wronged none: behold, ye have your own with advantage." Oh your soul then will esteem much one of God's kisses and embracements, in the testimony of a good conscience! The wicked, howbeit they be casting many evil thoughts, bitter words, and sinful deeds behind their back, yet they are, in so doing, clerks to their own process, and doing nothing all their lives, but gathering dittays[1] against themselves; for God is angry at the wicked every day. And I hope your present process shall be sighted[2] one day by Him who knoweth your just cause; and the bloody tongues, crafty foxes, double-ingrained hypocrites, shall appear as they are before his Majesty, when he shall take the mask off their faces: and oh! thrice happy will your soul be then, when God findeth you covered with nothing but the white robe of the saints' innocence, and the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

You have been of late in the King's wine-cellar, where you were welcomed by the Lord of the inn, upon a condition that you would walk in love. Put on love, and brotherly kindness, and long suffering. Wait as long upon the favor and turned hearts of enemies as your Christ waited upon you, and as dear Jesus stood at your soul's door with dewy and rainy locks, the long, cold night. Be angry, but sin not. I persuade myself that that holy unction within you, which teacheth you all things, is also saying, "Overcome evil with good." If that had not spoken in your soul, at the tears of your aged Pastor, you would not have agreed, and forgiven his foolish son who wronged you: but my Master bade me tell you, that God's blessing shall be upon you for it; and from him I say, "Grace, grace, and everlasting peace be upon you." It is my prayer for you, that your carriage may grace and adorn the Gospel of that Lord who hath graced you. I hear that your husband also was sick, but I beseech you, in the bowels of Jesus, to welcome every rod of God; for I find not, in the whole book of God, a greater note of the child of God, than to fall down and kiss the feet of an angry God; and when he seemeth to put you away from him, and to loose your hands that grip[3]

[1] Indictments. [2] Examined. [3] Grasp.

him, to look up in faith, and say, "I shall not, I will not be put away from thee: howbeit thy Majesty draw to free thyself of me, yet, Lord! give me leave to hold and cleave unto thyself." I shall pray that your husband may return in peace. Your decreet[1] cometh from Heaven, look up thither; for many (saith Solomon) seek the face of the ruler, but every man's judgment cometh of the Lord; and be glad that it is so, for Christ is the clerk of your process, and will see that all go right: and I persuade myself, that he is saying, "Yonder servants of mine are wronged; for my blood, Father, give them justice." Think you not, dear sister, but our High Priest, our Jesus, the Master of requests, presenteth our bills of complaint to the great Lord Justice? Yea, I believe it, since he is our Advocate, and Daniel calleth him the Spokesman, whose hand presenteth all to the Father.

For other businesses, I say nothing, whill[2] the Lord give me to see your face. I am credibly informed, that multitudes of England, and especially worthy preachers, and silenced preachers of London, are gone to New England; and I know one learned holy preacher, who hath written against the Arminians, who is gone thither. Our blessed Lord Jesus, who cannot get leave to sleep with his Spouse in this Land, is going to seek an inn where he will be better entertained; and what marvel? Wearied Jesus, after he had travelled from Geneva, by the ministry of worthy Mr. Knox, and was laid down in his bed, and reformation begun, and the curtains drawn, had not gotten his dear eyes well together, when irreverent bishops came in, and, with the din and noise of ceremonies, holy-days, and other Romish corruptions, awoke our Beloved. Others came to his bed-side, and drew the curtains, and put hands on his servants, banished, deprived and confined them; and for the pulpit, they got a stool and a cold fire in the Blackness:[3] and the nobility drew the covering off him, and have made him a poor naked Christ, in spoiling his servants of the tithes and [4]kirk-rents: and now there is such a noise of crying sins in the land, as the want of a knowledge of God, of mercy and truth, such swearing, whoring, lying, and blood touching blood, that Christ is putting on his clothes, and making him, like an ill-handled stranger, to go to other lands. Pray him, dear sister, to ly down again with his Beloved.

Remember my dearest love to John Gordon, to whom I shall write when I am strong; and to John Brown, Grizzel, Samuel, and William—Grace upon them. As you love Christ, keep Christ's favor; and put not upon[5] him when he sleepeth, to awake him before he please.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Your Brother in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, July 21, 1630.

1 Sentence. 2 Till. 3 Blackness Castle, on the Firth of Forth.
4 Church. 5 *To put upon*, to importune.

LETTER XI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WELL-BELOVED SISTER,—I have been thinking, since my departure from you, of the pride and malice of your adversaries: and ye may not (since ye have heard the Book of the Psalms so often) take hardly with this; for David's enemies snuffed at him, and through the pride of their hearts said, "The Lord will not require it," (Psalm x. 13.) I beseech you, therefore, in the bowels of Christ, to set before your eyes the patience of your Fore-runner, Jesus, "Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. ii. 23.) And, since our Lord and Redeemer with patience received many a black stroke on his glorious body, and many a buffet of the unbelieving world, and saith of himself, (Isaiah l. 6,) "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting," follow him, and think it not hard that you receive a blow with your Lord: take part with Jesus of his sufferings, and glory in the marks of Christ. If this storm were over, you must prepare yourself for a new wound. For, five thousand years ago, our Lord proclaimed deadly war betwixt the Seed of the Woman and the seed of the Serpent. And marvel not that one town cannot keep the children of God and the children of the Devil; for one belly could not keep Jacob and Esau; one house could not keep peaceably together Isaac the Son of the Promise, and Ishmael the Son of the Hand-maid. Be you upon Christ's side of it, and care not what flesh can do. Hold yourself fast by your Saviour, howbeit ye be buffeted, and those that follow him. "Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be." See 2 Cor. iv. 8, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair;" (ver. 9,) "persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." If you can possess your soul in patience, their day is coming.

Worthy and Dear Sister, know how to carry yourself in trouble: and when ye are hated and reproached, the Lord showeth it to you. (Psalm xliv. 17.) "All this is come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy covenant." (Psalm cxix. 92.) "Unless thy law had been my delights, I had perished in mine affliction." Keep God's covenant in your trials. Hold you by his blessed word, and sin not. Flee anger, wrath, grudging, envying, fretting. Forgive an hundred pence to your fellow-servant, because your Lord hath forgiven you ten thousand talents. For, I assure you by the Lord, that your adversaries shall get no advantage against you except ye sin, and offend your Lord in your sufferings. But the way to overcome is, by patience, forgiving, and praying for your enemies, in doing

whereof you heap coals upon their heads, and your Lord will open a door to you in your trouble. Wait upon him, as the night-watch waiteth for the morning. He will not tarry; go up to your watch-tower, and come not down, but by prayer, and faith, and hope, wait on. When the sea is full, it will ebb again; and, so soon as the wicked are come to the top of their pride, and are waxed high and mighty, then is their change approaching—They that believe make not haste.

Remember Zion, forget her not; for her enemies are many, for the nations are gathered together against her; "But they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel; for he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion." (Micah iv. 12, 13.) Behold, God hath gathered his enemies together as sheaves to the threshing—let us stay and rest upon these promises. Now again, I trust in our Lord, that ye shall by faith sustain yourself, and comfort yourself in your Lord, and be strong in his power; for you are in the beaten, and common way to Heaven, when you are under our Lord's crosses. Ye have reason to rejoice in it more than in a crown of gold, and to rejoice, and be glad to bear the reproaches of Christ.

I rest—recommending you, and yours, forever, to the grace and mercy of God.

Yours, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, Feb. 11, 1631.

LETTER XII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved in the Lord,—Ye are not unacquainted with the day of our Communion. I entreat, therefore, the aid of your prayers for that great work, which is one of our feast-days, wherein our Well-beloved, Jesus, rejoiceth, and is merry with his friends. Good cause have we to wonder at his love, since the day of his death was such a sorrowful day to him, even the day when his mother, the Kirk[1] crowned him with thorns, and he had many against him, and compeared[2] his lone[3] in the open fields against them all—yet he delighteth with us to remember that day. Let us love him, and be glad and rejoice in his salvation. I am confident that you shall see the Son of God that day; and I dare, in his name, invite you to his banquet. Many a time you have been well entertained in his house, and he changeth not upon his friends, nor chideth them for too great kindness. Yet I speak not this to make you leave off to pray for me, who have nothing of myself, but in so far as daily I receive from Him, who is made of his Father a running-over fountain, at which I and others may

[1] Church. [2] Appeared. [3] By himself alone.

come with thirsty souls, and fill our vessels. Long hath this well been standing open to us. Lord Jesus, lock it not up again upon us. I am sorry for our desolate Kirk;[1] yet I dare not but trust, that so long as there be any of God's lost money here, he will not blow out the candle. The Lord make fair candlesticks in his house, and remove the blind lights!

I have been, this time by-passed, thinking much of the incoming of the Kirk[1] of the Jews. Pray for them. When they were in their Lord's house, at their Father's elbow, they were longing for the coming of their Little Sister, the Kirk[1] of the Gentiles. They said to their Lord, (Cant. viii. ver. 8,) "We have a little Sister, and she hath no breasts; what shall we do for our Sister in the day when she shall be spoken for?" Let us give them a meeting. What shall we do for our elder Sister, the Jews? Lord Jesus give them breasts! That were a glad day, to see us and them both set down at one table, and Christ at the head of the table. Then would our Lord come shortly with his fair guard, to hold his great court.

Dear sister, be patient for the Lord's sake, under the wrongs that you suffer of the wicked. Your Lord shall make ye see your desire on your enemies; some of them shall be cut off. (Job xv. ver. 33,) They shall shake off their unripe grapes as the vine, and cast off their flower as the olive: God will make them like unripe sour grapes, shaken off the tree with the blast of God's wrath; and, therefore, pity them, and pray for them. Others of them must remain to exercise you; God hath said of them, Let the tares grow up whill[2] harvest. (Matt. xiii.) It proveth you to be your Lord's wheat. Be patient, Christ went to Heaven with many a wrong. His visage and countenance were all marred more than the sons of men. Ye may not be above your Master. Many a black stroke received innocent Jesus, and he received no mends,[3] but referred them all to the great Court-day, when all things shall be righted.

I desire to hear from you within a day or two, if Mr. Robert remain in his purpose to come and help us. God will give you joy of your children. I pray for them, by their names. I bless you, from the Lord, your husband and children.—Grace, grace and mercy be multiplied upon you.

Yours, in the Lord, forever, S. R.

Anwoth, May 7, 1631.

LETTER XIII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved Sister,—My love in Christ remembered—I have received a letter from Edinburgh, certainly informing me,

[1] Church. [2] Till. [3] Reparation.

that the English service, and the organs, and King James's Psalms, are to be imposed upon our Kirk,[1] and that the Bishops are dealing for a General Assembly. A. R. hath confirmed the news also, and saith, he spoke with Sir William Alexander, who is to come down with his Prince's warrant to that effect. I am desired, in the received letter, to acquaint the best affected about me with that storm; therefore, I entreat you, and charge you, in the Lord's name, to pray; but do not communicate this to any whill[2] I see you. My heart is broken at the remembrance of it; and it was my fear, and answereth to my last letter, except one, that I wrote unto you.

Dearly beloved, be not casten[3] down, but let us, as the Lord's doves, take us to our wings, for other armor we have none, and flee into the hole of the Rock. It is true that A. R. saith that the worthiest men in England are banished and silenced, about the number of sixteen or seventeen choice Gospel-preachers, and that the persecution is already begun. Howbeit, I do not write this unto you with a dry face, yet I am confident in the Lord's strength, that Christ and his side shall overcome; and you shall be assured that the Kirk[1] were not a Kirk,[1] if it were not so. As our dear husband, in wooing his Kirk,[1] received many a black stroke. so his bride in wooing him getteth many blows; and in this wooing there are strokes upon both sides. Let it be so. The Devil shall not make the marriage go back, neither can he tear the contract; the end shall be mercy. Yet, notwithstanding all this, we have no warrant of God to leave off all lawful means. I have been writing to you the counsels and draughts of men against the Kirk;[1] but they know not, as Micah saith, the counsel of Jehovah. The great men of the world may make ready the fiery furnace for Zion, but, trow ye that they can cause the fire to burn? No. He that made the fire, I trust, will not say Amen to their decreets.[4] I trust in my Lord, that God hath not subscribed their bill, and that their conclusions have not yet passed our Great King's seal. Therefore, if ye think good, address yourself first to the Lord, and then to A. R., anent[5] the business that you know.

I am most unkindly handled by the Presbytery; and, as if I had been a stranger, and not a member of that seat to sit in judgment with them, I was summoned, by their order, as a witness against B. A.; but they have got no advantage in that matter. Other particulars you shall hear, God willing, at meeting.

Anent[5] the matter betwixt you and J. E., I remember it to God. I entreat you in the Lord, to be submissive to his will; for the higher that their pride mount up, they are the nearer a fall: the Lord will more and more discover that man. Let your husband, in all matters of judgment, take Christ's part for the defence of the poor, and needy, and oppressed, for the maintenance of equity and justice in the town. And take you no fear that He will take your

[1] Church. [2] Till. [3] Cast. [4] Sentences. [5] Concerning.

part, and then you are strong enough. What? Howbeit ye receive indignities, for your Lord's sake let it be so. When he will put His holy hand up to your face in Heaven, and dry your face, and wipe the tears from your eyes, judge ye if ye will not have cause then to rejoice?

Anent[1] other particulars, if ye would speak with me, appoint any of the first three days of the next week, in Carlton, when Carlton is at home, and acquaint me with your desires.

Remember me to God, and my dearest affection to your husband: and, for Zion's sake, hold not your peace.

The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you, and your husband, and children.

Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

Anwoth, June 2, 1631.

LETTER XIV.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Dear Mistress,—I have not time, this day, to write to you; but God, knowing my present state, and the necessities of my calling, will, I hope, spare my mother's life for a time—for the which I have cause to thank my Lord. I entreat you not to be cast down, for that which I wrote before to you, anent[1] the planting of a minister in your town. Believe, and you shall see the salvation of God. I write this because, when you suffer, my heart suffereth with you. I do believe that your soul shall have joy in your labors and holy desires for that work.

Grace upon you, and your husband, and your children.

Yours ever, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XV.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—Having saluted you in the Lord Jesus—I thought it my duty, having the occasion of this bearer, to write again unto your Ladyship. Though I have no new purpose, but what I wrote of before, yet ye cannot be too often awakened to go forward toward your city, since your way is long, and, (for anything ye know,) your day is short; and your Lord requireth of you, as ye advance in years, and steal forward insensibly towards eternity, that your faith may grow and ripen for the Lord's harvest. For the great Husbandman giveth a season to his fruits, that they may come to maturity; and having got their

[1] Concerning.

fill of the tree, that they may be then shaken, and gathered in for his use; whereas the wicked rot upon the tree, and their branch shall not be green; (Job xv. 33,) "He shall shake off his unripe grapes as the vine, and shall cast off his flower as the olive." It is God's mercy to you, madam, that he giveth you your fill, even to loathing, of this bitter world, that ye may willingly leave it, and, like a full and satisfied banqueter, long for the drawing of the table; and at last, having trampled under your feet all the rotten pleasures that are under sun and moon, and having, "rejoiced as though ye rejoiced not, and having bought as though ye possessed not," (1 Cor. vii. 30,) ye may, like an old crazy ship, arrive at your Lord's harbor, and be made welcome, as one of those who have ever had one foot loose from this earth, longing for that place where your soul shall feast and banquet forever and ever upon a glorious sight of the incomprehensible Trinity, and where ye shall see the fair face of the Man, Christ, even the beautiful face, that was once, for your cause, more marred than any of the visages of the sons of men, (Isa. lii. 14,) and was all covered with spitting and blood. Be content to wade through the waters betwixt you and glory with him, holding his right hand fast; for he knoweth all the fords. Howbeit ye may be ducked, yet ye cannot drown, being in his company; and ye may, all the way to glory, see the way bedewed with His blood, who is the Forerunner. Be not afraid, therefore, when ye come even to the black and swelling river of death, to put in your foot, and wade after him. The current, how strong soever, cannot carry you down the water to Hell: the death and resurrection of the Son of God are stepping-stones, and a stay to you; set down your feet by faith upon these stones, and go through as on dry land. If ye knew what he is preparing for you, ye would be too glad. He will not, (it may be,) give you a full draught till ye come up to the well-head, and drink, yea, drink abundantly, of the pure river of the water of life, "that proceedeth out from the throne of God, and from the Lamb." (Rev. xxii. 1.) Madam, tire not, weary not. I dare find you the Son of God caution[1] that when ye are got up thither, and have casten[2] your eyes to view the golden city, and the fair and never withering Tree of Life, which beareth twelve manner of fruits every month, ye will then say, "Four-and-twenty hours' abode in that place is worth threescore and ten years' sorrow upon earth." If ye can but say that ye long earnestly to be carried up thither, (as I hope ye cannot for shame deny him the honor of having wrought that desire in your soul,) then hath your Lord given you an earnest: and, madam, do ye believe that our Lord will lose his earnest, and rue of the bargain, and change his mind, as if he were a man, that can lie, or the son of man that can repent? Nay, he is unchangeable, and the same this year that he was the former year. And his Son, Jesus, who upon earth ate and drank with publicans and sinners, and spake and conferred with whores and harlots,

[1] Surety. [2] Cast.

and put out his holy hand and touched the leper's filthy skin, and came evermore nigh sinners, even now, in glory, is yet that same Lord: his honor and his great court[1] in Heaven have not made him forget his poor friends on earth; in him honors change not manners, and he doth yet desire your company. Take him for the old Christ, and claim still kindness to him, and say, "Oh, it is so! he is not changed, but I am changed:" nay, it is a part of his unchangeable love, and an article of the New Covenant, to keep you that ye cannot dispone[2] him nor sell him. He hath not played fast and loose with us, in the Covenant of grace, so that we may run from him at our pleasure. His love hath made the bargain surer than so; for Jesus, as the cautioner,[3] is bound for us, (Heb. vii. 22,) and it cannot stand with his honor to die in the borrows,[4] (as we use to say,) and lose thee, whom he must render again to the Father, when he shall give up the kingdom to him. Consent, and say "Amen" to the promises, and ye have sealed that God is true, and Christ is yours. This is an easy market: ye but look on with faith; for Christ suffered all, and paid all.

Madam, fearing lest I be tedious to your Ladyship, I must stop here, desiring always to hear that your Ladyship is well, and that ye have still your face up the mountain. Pray for us, madam, and for Zion, whereof ye are a part. We expect a trial. God's wheat in this land must go through Satan's sieve, but their faith shall not fail. I am still wrestling in our Lord's work, and have been tried and tempted by brethren, who look awry to the gospel.

Now He, that is able to keep you until that day, preserve your soul, body and spirit, and present you before his face with his own Bride, spotless and blameless.

Your Ladyship's,

To be commanded always in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, Nov. 26, 1631.

LETTER XVI.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—I am grieved exceedingly that your Ladyship should think, or have cause to think, that such as love you in God, in this country, are forgetful of you. For myself, madam, I owe to your Ladyship all evidences of my high respect (in the sight of my Lord, whose truth I preach, I am bold to say it,) for his rich grace in you.

My communion, put off till the end of a longsome and rainy harvest, and the presbyterial exercise (as the bearer can inform your Ladyship) hindered me to see you. And for my people's

[1] Favor, influence. [2] Dispose. [3] Surety.
[4] *To die in the borrows*, to fail while the *borrow*, or pledge, or surety, for another.

sake (finding them like hot iron, that cooleth being out of the fire, and that is pliable to no work,) I do not stir abroad, neither have I left them at all since your Ladyship was in the country, save at one time only, about two years ago; yet I dare not say but it is a fault, howbeit no defect in my affection; and I trust to make it up again so soon as possibly I am able to wait upon you.

Madam, I have no new purpose to write unto you, but of that which I think, nay, which our Lord thinketh, needful, that one thing, Mary's good part, which ye have chosen. (Luke x. 42.) Madam, all that God hath, both himself and the creatures, he is dealing and parting amongst the sons of Adam. There are none so poor as that they can say in his face that he hath given them nothing; but there is no small odds betwixt the gifts given to lawful bairns[1] and to bastards; and the more greedy ye are in suiting,[2] the more willing is he to give, delighting to be called open-handed.

I hope that your Ladyship laboreth to get assurance of the surest patrimony, even God himself. Ye will find in Christianity that God aimeth, in all his dealings with his children, to bring them to a high contempt of, and deadly feud with the world; and to set a high price upon Christ, and to think him one who cannot be bought for gold, and well worthy the fighting for. And for no other cause, madam, doth the Lord withdraw from you the childish toys and the earthly delights that he giveth unto others, but that he may have you wholly to himself. Think, therefore, of the Lord, as of one who cometh to woo you in marriage, when ye are in the furnace; he seeketh his answer of you in affliction, to see if ye will say, "Even so I take him." Madam, give him this answer presently, and in your mind do not secretly grudge nor murmur. When he is striking you in love, beware to strike again; that is dangerous, for those who strike again shall get the last blow.

If I hit not upon the right string, it is because I am not acquainted with your Ladyship's present condition; but I believe that your Ladyship goeth on foot laughing, and putting on a good countenance before the world, and yet ye carry heaviness about with you. Ye do well, madam, not to make them witnesses of your grief who cannot be curers of it; but be exceedingly charitable of your dear Lord. As there be some friends worldly, of whom ye will not entertain an ill thought, far more ought ye to believe good evermore of your dear Friend, that lovely fair person, Jesus Christ. The thorn is one of the most cursed, and angry, and crabbed weeds that the earth yieldeth, and yet out of it springeth the rose, one of the most sweetly smelled flowers, and most delightful to the eye, that the earth hath. Your Lord will make joy and gladness out of your afflictions; for all his roses have a fragrant smell. Wait for the time when his own holy hand shall hold them to your nose; and, if ye would have present comfort under the cross, be much in prayer; for at that time your

[1] Children. [2] Urging a suit.

faith kisseth Christ, and he kisseth the soul—and oh! if the breath of his holy mouth be sweet! I dare be caution,[1] out of some small experience, that ye shall not be beguiled; for the world (yea not a few[2] number of God's children,) know not well what that is which they call a godhead. But, madam, come near to the Godhead, and look down to the bottom of the well: there is much in him, and sweet were that death to drown in such a well. Your grief taketh liberty to work upon your mind, when ye are not busied in the meditation of the ever-delighting and all-blessed Godhead. If ye would lay the price ye give out (which is but some few years' pain and trouble,) beside the commodities ye are to receive, ye would see that they were not worthy to be laid in the balance together; but it is nature that maketh you look to what ye give out, and weakness of faith that hindereth you to see what ye shall take in. Amend your hope, and frist[3] your faithful Lord awhile. He maketh himself your debtor in the New Covenant: he is honest—take his word. (Nahum i. 9,) "Affliction shall not spring up the second time." (Rev. xxi. 7,) "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." Of all things, then, which ye want in this life, madam, I am able to say nothing, if that be not believed which ye have. (Rev. ii. 7, and Rev. iii. 5,) "The overcomer shall be clothed in white raiment," &c.; and, (ver. 21,) "To the overcomer I will give to sit with me on my throne, as I overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne." Consider, madam, if ye are not high up now, and far ben[4] in the palace of our Lord, when ye are upon a throne, in white raiment, at lovely Christ's elbow. Oh, thrice fools are we, who, like new-born princes weeping in the cradle, know not that there is a kingdom before them! Then let our Lord's sweet hand square us, and hammer us, and strike off the knots of pride, self-love, and world-worship, and infidelity, that he may make us stones and pillars in his Father's house. (Rev. iii. 12.) Madam, what think ye to take binding with the fair Corner-stone, Jesus? The Lord give you wisdom to believe and hope that your day is coming. I hope to be a witness of your joy, as I have been a hearer and beholder of your grief. Think ye it much to follow the Heir of the crown, who hath experience of sorrows, and was acquainted with grief? (Isaiah liii.) It were pride to aim to be above the King's Son: it is more than we deserve that we are equals in glory, in a manner.

Now, commending you to the dearest grace, and mercy of God, I rest,

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, Jan. 4, 1642.

[1] Surety. [2] Small. [3] Credit.
[4] Admitted to great familiarity.

LETTER XVII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Understanding, a little after the writing of my last letter, of the going of this bearer, I would not omit the opportunity of remembering your Ladyship, still harping upon that string which, in our whole lifetime, is never too often touched upon, nor is our lesson well enough learned, that there is a necessity of advancing in the way to the Kingdom of God, of the contempt of the world, of denying ourself, and of bearing of our Lord's cross; which is no less needful for us than daily food. And among many marks that we are on this journey, and under sail toward Heaven, this is one, when the love of God so filleth our hearts that we forget to love and care too much for the having or wanting of other things; as one extreme heat burneth out another. By this, madam, ye know that ye have betrothed your soul in marriage to Christ, when ye do make but small reckoning of all other suitors or wooers, and when ye can, (having little in hand, but much in hope) live as a young heir during the time of his non-age and minority, being content to be as hardly handled, and under as precise a reckoning as servants, because his hope is upon the inheritance. For this cause, God's bairns[1] take well with the spoiling of their goods, (Heb. x. 34,) knowing in themselves that they have in Heaven a better and an enduring substance. That day that the earth and the works therein shall be burned with fire, (2 Pet. iii. 10,) your hidden hope and your hidden life shall appear. And, therefore, since ye have not now many years of your endless eternity, and know not how soon the sky above your head shall rive, and the Son of Man be seen in the clouds of Heaven, what better and wiser course can ye take than to think that your one foot is here, and your other foot in the life to come, and to leave off loving, desiring, or grieving for the wants that shall be made up, when your Lord and ye shall meet, and when ye shall give in your bill that day of all your wants here? If your losses be not made up, ye have place to challenge the Almighty; but it shall not be so. Ye shall then rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and your joy shall none take from you, (1 Pet. i. 8; John xvi. 22.)

It is enough, that the Lord hath promised you great things; only let the time of bestowing them be in his own carving. It is not for us to set an hour-glass to the Creator of time, since he and we differ only in the term of payment. Since he hath promised payment, and we believe it, it is no great matter, we will put that in his own will; as the frank buyer, who cometh near to what the seller seeketh, useth at last to refer the difference to his will, and so cutteth off the course of mutual prigging.[2] Madam, do not

[1] Children. [2] Chaffering.

prig[1] with your frank-hearted and gracious Lord about the time of the fulfilling of your joys. It shall be—God hath said it. Bide his harvest, wait upon his whitsunday.[2] His day is better than your day. He putteth not the hook[3] into the corn till it be ripe and full-eared. The great Angel of the Covenant bear you company, till the trumpet shall sound and the voice of the Archangel awaken the dead. Ye shall find it your only happiness, under whatever thing disturbeth and crosseth the peace of your mind in this life, to love nothing for itself, but only God for himself. It is the crooked love of some harlots, that they love bracelets, earrings, and rings, better than the lover that sendeth them: but God will not be so loved: for that were to behave as harlots, and not as the chaste spouse, to abate from our love when these things are pulled away. Our love to him should begin on earth, as it shall be in Heaven. For, as the bride taketh not by a thousand degrees so much delight in her wedding-garment as she doth in her bridegroom, so we, in the life to come, howbeit clothed with glory as with a robe, shall not be so much affected with the glory that goeth about us as with the Bridegroom's joyful face and presence. Madam, if ye can win[4] to this here, the field is won; and your mind, for anything ye want, or for anything your Lord can take from you, shall soon be calmed and quieted. Get himself as a pawn, and keep him, till your dear Lord come and loose the pawn, rue upon you, and give you all again that he took from you, even a thousand talents for one penny. It is not ill to lend God willingly, who otherwise both will and may take from you against your will. It is good to play the usurer with him, and take in, instead of ten of the hundred, an hundred of ten, often an hundred of one.

Madam, fearing to be tedious to you, I break off here, commending you, as I trust to do while I live, your person, ways, burdens, and all that concerneth you, to that Almighty, who is able to bear you and your burdens. I still remember you to Him, who will cause you one day to laugh. I expect that whatever ye can do by word or deed, for the Lord's friendless Zion, ye will do it. She is your Mother, forget her not, for the Lord intendeth to melt and try this land; and it is high time that we were all upon our feet, and falling about[5] to try what claim we have to Christ. It is like that the Bridegroom will be taken from us, and then we shall mourn. Dear Jesus, remove not, else take us with thee!

Grace, grace be with you forever.

Your Ladyship's, at all dutiful obedience, S. R.

Anwoth, Jan. 14, 1632.

[1] Higgle. [2] Termday. [3] Sickle. [4] Attain. [5] Searching about.

LETTER XVIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Your Ladyship will not, I know, weary nor be offended, though I trouble you with many letters: the memory of what obligations I am under to your Ladyship is the cause of it.

I am possibly impertinent in what I write, because of my ignorance of your present estate; but, for all that is said, I have learned of Mr. William Dalgleish that ye have not changed upon, nor wearied of your sweet Master, Christ, and his service; neither were it your part to change upon Him, who resteth in his love. Ye are among honorable company, and such as affect grandeur and court. But, madam, thinking upon your estate, I think that I see an improvident wooer, coming too late to seek a bride, because she is contracted already, and promised away to another; and so the wooer's busking[1] and bravery (who cometh to you as, who but he!) is in vain. The outward pomp of this busy wooer, a beguiling world, is now coming in to suit[2] your soul too late, when ye have promised away your soul to Christ many years ago. And I know, madam, what answer ye may justly make to the late suitor; even this, "Ye are too long in coming. My soul, the bride, is away already, and the contract with Christ subscribed; and I cannot choose but I must be honest and faithful to him." Honorable Lady, keep your first love, and hold the first match with that soul-delighting, lovely Bridegroom, our sweet, sweet Lord, Jesus, fairer than all the children of men, the Rose of Sharon, and the fairest and sweetest-smelled rose in all his Father's garden. There is none like him. I would not exchange one smile of his lovely face with kingdoms. Madam, let others take their silly[3] feckless[4] heaven in this life. Envy them not; but let your soul, like a tarrowing[5] and mislearned[6] child, take the dorts,[7] as we use to speak, or cast at[8] all things, and disdain them, except one only—either Christ or nothing. Your Well-beloved, Jesus, will be content, that ye be here devoutly proud, and ill[9] to please, as one that contemneth all husbands but himself. Either the King's Son or no husband at all—this is humble and worthy ambition. What have ye to do to dally with a whorish and foolish world? Your jealous husband will not be content that ye look by[10] him to another: he will be jealous indeed, and offended, if ye kiss another than himself.

What weights do burden you, madam, I know not, but think it great mercy that your Lord from your youth hath been hedging-in your out-straying affections, that they may not go a-whoring from himself. If ye were his bastard, he would not nurture you so: if

[1] Decking. [2] Court. [3] Contemptible. [4] Poor, unreal.
[5] *To tarrow*, to feel reluctance, especially to take one's food, arising from some pettish humor. [6] Illbred. [7] Pet. [8] Object to.
[9] Hard. [10] Past.

ye were for the slaughter, ye would be fattened; but be content, ye are his wheat growing in our Lord's field, (Matt. xiii. 25, 38.) And if wheat, ye must go under our Lord's threshing instrument, in his barn-floor, and go through his sieve, (Amos ix. 9,) and through his mill to be bruised, as the Prince of our salvation, Jesus, was, (Isa. liii. 10,) that ye may be found good bread in your Lord's house. Lord Jesus, bless the spiritual husbandry, and separate you from the chaff that dow not bide[1] the wind. I am persuaded that your glass is spending itself by little and little, and that if ye knew who is before you, ye would rejoice in your tribulation. Think ye it a small honor to stand before the throne of God and the Lamb, and to be clothed in white, and to be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and to be led to the Fountain of living waters, and to come to the well-head, even God himself, and get your fill of the clear, cold, sweet, refreshing Water of life, the King's own well, and to put up your own sinful hand to the Tree of Life, and take down and eat the sweetest apple in all God's heavenly paradise, Jesus Christ, your Life and your Lord? Up your heart! shout for joy! your King is coming to fetch you to his Father's house.

Madam, I am in exceeding great heaviness; God thinking it best for my own soul thus to exercise me, thereby, it may be, to fit me to be his mouth to others; I see and hear, at home and abroad, nothing but matter of grief and discouragement, which indeed maketh my life bitter—and I hope in God never to get my will in this world. And I expect ere long a fiery trial upon the Church; for as many men almost in England and Scotland, as many false friends to Christ, and as many pulling and drawing to pull the crown off his holy head; and for fear that our Beloved stay amongst us, (as if his room were more desirable than himself,) men are bidding him go seek his lodging. Madam, if ye have a part in silly[2] friendless Zion, as I know ye have, speak a word on her behalf to God and man. If ye can do nothing else, speak for Jesus, and ye shall thereby be a witness against this declining age. Now, from my very soul, laying and leaving you on the Lord, and desiring a part in your prayers, (as my Lord knoweth that I remember you,) I deliver over your body, spirit, and all your necessities, to the hands of our Lord, and remain forever,

Your Ladyship's, in your sweet Lord Jesus, and mine, S. R.

Anwoth, Feb. 13, 1632.

LETTER XIX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Beloved Mistress,—My dearest love in Christ remembered to you—know that Mr. Abraham showed me that there is to be a

[1] Is not able to stand. [2] Poor, in the sense of exciting compassion.

meeting of the Bishops at Edinburgh shortly. The causes are known to themselves; it is our part to hold up our hands for Zion. Howbeit it is reported that they came sad from court. It is our Lord's wisdom that his Kirk should ever hing[1] by a thread; and yet the thread breaketh not, being hung upon Him, who is the sure Nail in David's house, (Isaiah xxii. ver. 23,) upon whom all the vessels, great and small, do hang: and the Nail (God be thanked) neither crooketh, nor can be broken. Jesus, that Flower of Jesse, set without hands, getteth many a blast, and yet withereth not, because he is his Father's noble Rose, casting a sweet smell through Heaven and earth, and must grow; and in the same garden with him grow the saints, God's fair and beautiful lilies, under wind and rain, and all sun-burned, and yet life remaineth at the root. Keep within his garden, and ye shall grow with them, till the great Husbandman, our dear Master-gardener, come, and transplant you from the lower part of his vineyard up to the higher, to the very heart of his garden, above the wrongs of the rain, sun, or wind; and then wait upon the times of the blowing of the sweet south and north wind of his gracious Spirit, that may make you cast a sweet smell in your Beloved's nostrils; and bid your Beloved come down to his garden, and eat of his pleasant fruits. (Cant. iv. ver. 16.) And he will come. Ye will get no more than this, until ye come up to the Well-head, where he shall put up your hand, and take down the apples of the Tree of Life, and eat under the shadow of that Tree—these apples are sweeter up beside the Tree, than they are down here, in this piece of a clay prison-house. I have no joy but in the thoughts of these times. Doubt not of your Lord's part, and the Spouse's part—she shall be in good case. That word shall stand, (Hosea xiv. 5,) "I will be as the dew to Israel, he shall grow up as the lily; and cast out his roots as Lebanon." (Ver. 6,) "His branches shall spread, his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon." (Isaiah xi. ver. 12,) Christ shall set up his colors, and his ensign for the nations, and shall gather together the outcasts of Israel. (Ezek. xxxvii. 11,) "Then the Lord said to me, Son of man, these dead bones are the whole House of Israel; behold, they say, Our bones are dried, our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts." (Ver. 12,) "Therefore prophesy unto them, and say, Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you come up out of your graves, and bring you unto the land of Israel." These promises are not wind, but the breast of our Beloved, Christ, which we must suck, and draw comfort out of.

We have cause to pity those poor creatures, that stand out against Christ, and the building of his house. Silly men, they have but a feckless[2] and silly[3] heaven, nothing but meat and clothes; and they laugh a day or two in the world, and then in a moment go down to the grave. And they shall not be able to

[1] Hang. [2] Unsubstantial. [3] Despicable.

hinder Christ's building; he that is Master of the work, will lead stones[1] to the wall over their belly.

And for that present tumult, that the children of this world raise anent[2] the planting of your town with a pastor, believe and stay upon God (as ye still shame us all in believing;) go forward in the strength of the Lord, and from my Lord I say, before whom I stand, have your eyes upon none but the Lord of armies; and the Lord will either let ye see what ye long to see, or then fulfil your joy more abundantly another way. Ye and yours, and the children of God whom ye care for, in that town, shall have as much of the Son of God's supper, cut and laid down upon your trenchers, be he who he will that carveth, as shall feed you to eternal life. And be not cast down for all that is done, your reward is laid up with God. I hope to see ye laugh and leap for joy. Will the temple be built without din and tumult? No! God's stones of his house in Germany are laid with blood; and the Son of God no sooner beginneth to chop and hew stones with his hammer, but as soon the sword is drawn. If the work were of men, the world would set their shoulders to yours; but in Christ's work, two or three must fight against a presbytery, (though his own court,) and a city. This proveth that it is Christ's errand, and, therefore, that it shall thrive. Let them lay iron chains cross over the door,—stay, and believe, and wait, whill[3] the Lion of the tribe of Judah come. And He, that cometh from Heaven clothed with the rainbow, and hath the little book in his hand, when he taketh a grip[4] of their chains, will lay the door upon the broad-side,[5] and come in, and go up to the pulpit, and take the man with him whom he hath chosen for his work. Therefore, let me hear from you, whether you be in heaviness, or rejoicing under hope, that I may take part of your grief, and bear it with you, and get part of your joy, which is to me also as my own joy.

And as to what are your fears anent[2] the health or life of your dear children, lay it upon Christ's shoulders; let him bear all. Loose your grips[4] of them all; and, when your dear Lord pulleth, let them go with faith and joy; it is a tried faith, to kiss a Lord that is taking from you. Let them be careful, during the short time that they are here, to run, and get a grip[4] of the prize. Christ is standing in the end of their way, holding up the garland of endless glory to their eyes, and is crying, "Run fast, and come, and receive:" happy are they, if their breath serve them to run, and not to weary, whill[3] their Lord, with his own dear hand, put the crown upon their head. It is not long days, but good days, that make the life glorious and happy; and our dear Lord is gracious to us, who shorteneth, and hath made the way to glory shorter than it was: so that the crown that Noah did fight for five hundred years, children may now obtain in fifteen years. And Heaven is in some sort better for us now than it was to Noah: for the

[1] *To lead stones*, to carry stones in a cart from one place to another.
[2] Concerning. [3] Till. [4] Gripe, hold. [5] Flat on the side.

Man, Christ, is there now, who was not come in the flesh in Noah's days.

You will show this to your children, whom my soul in Christ blesseth; and entreat them, by the mercies of God, and the bowels of Jesus Christ, to covenant with Jesus Christ to be his, and to make up the bond of friendship betwixt their souls and their Christ, that they may have acquaintance in Heaven, and a friend at God's right hand—such a friend at court is much worth.

Now I take my leave of you, praying my Christ, and your Christ, to fulfil our joy, and moe graces and blessings from our sweet Lord Jesus to your soul, your husband's, and children, than ever I wrote of letters of A, B, C, to you.

Grace, grace, be with you.

Yours, in my sweet Master, Jesus Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, March 9, 1632.

LETTER XX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

DEARLY BELOVED MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered —Ye are not ignorant what our Lord, in his love-visitation, hath been doing with your soul, even letting you see a little sight of that dark trance which ye must go through ere you come to glory. Your life hath been near the grave, and ye were at the door, and ye found the door shut fast; your dear Christ thinking it not time to open these gates to you, whill[1] ye have fought some longer in his camp. And, therefore, he willeth you to put on your armor again, and to take no truce with the Devil, or this present world. Ye are little obliged to any of the two: but I rejoice in this, that when any of the two cometh to suit[2] your soul in marriage, ye have an answer in readiness to tell them—"Ye are too long a-coming: I have many a year since promised my soul to another, even to my dearest Lord Jesus, to whom I must be true." And, therefore, ye are come back to us again, to help us to pray for Christ's fair Bride—a marrow[3] dear to him.

Be not cast down in heart, to hear that the world barketh at Christ's strangers, both in Ireland and in this land. They do it because their Lord hath chosen them out of this world; and this is one of our Lord's reproaches, to be hated and ill-entreated by men; the silly[4] stranger in an unco[5] country, must take with smoky inn, and coarse cheer, and a hard bed, and a barking ill-tongued host. It is not long to-day, and he will to his journey upon the morrow, and leave them all. Indeed our fair morning is at hand, the day-star is near the rising, and we are not many miles from home; what matter of ill entertainment in the smoky

1 Till. 2 Court. 3 Partner. 4 Poor. 5 Strange.

inn of this miserable life? We are not to stay here, and we shall be dearly welcome to Him whom we go to. And I hope, that when I shall see you clothed in white raiment, washen[1] in the blood of the Lamb, and shall see you even at the elbow of your dearest Lord and Redeemer, and a crown upon your head, and following our Lamb, and lovely Lord whithersoever he goeth, ye will think nothing of all these days, and ye will then rejoice, and no man shall take your joy from you. And it is certain there is not much sand to run in your Lord's sand-glass, and that day is at hand, and, till then, your Lord in this life is giving you some little feasts. It is true that ye see him not now, as ye shall see him then. Your Well-beloved standeth now behind the wall, looking out at the window, (Cant. ii. 9,) and ye see but a little of his face; then ye shall see all his face, and all the Saviour,—a long, and high, and broad Lord Jesus, the most lovely person among the children of men. O joy of joys! that our souls know there is such a great supper preparing for us; even howbeit we be but half-hungered[2] of Christ here, and many a time dine behind noon,[3] yet the supper of the Lamb shall come in time, and will be set before us, before we famish, and lose our stomachs. Ye have cause to hold up your heart in remembrance, and hope of that fair, long, summer-day; for in this night of your life, wherein ye are in the body, absent from the Lord, Christ's fair moon-light, in his word and sacraments, in prayer, feeling, and holy conference, hath shined upon you, to let you see the way to the city.

I confess that our diet here is but sparing; we get but tastings of our Lord's comforts; but the cause of that is not because our Steward, Jesus, is a niggard, and narrow-hearted, but because our stomachs are weak, and we are narrow-hearted: but the great feast is coming, when our hearts shall be enlarged, and the chambers of them made fair and wide, to take in the great Lord Jesus —come in, then, Lord Jesus, to hungry souls, gaping for thee! In this journey take the Bridegroom, as ye may have him, and be greedy of his smallest crumbs: but, dear mistress, buy none of Christ's delicates spiritual with sin, or fasting against your weak body. Remember that ye are in the body, and it is the lodging-house, and ye may not, without offending the Lord, suffer the old walls of that house to fall down, through want of necessary food. Your body is the dwelling-house of the Spirit; and, therefore, for the love ye carry to the sweet Guest, give a due regard to his house of clay. When he looseth the wall, why not? welcome, Lord Jesus! but it is a fearful sin in us, by hurting the body by fasting, to loose one stone, or the least piece of timber in it; for the house is not our own, the Bridegroom is with you yet; so fast, as that, also, ye may feast and rejoice in him.

I think upon your magistrates; but He, that is clothed in linen, and hath the writer's ink-horn by his side, hath written up their names in Heaven already—pray, and be content with his will.

[1] Washed. [2] Half-fed.
[3] Dinner, in the days of Rutherford, was never later than noon.

God hath a council-house in Heaven, and the end will be mercy unto you. For the planting of your town with a godly minister, have your eye upon the Lord of the harvest. I dare promise you that God, in this life, will fill your soul with the fatness of his house, for your care to see Christ's bairns fed; and your posterity shall know it, to whom I pray for mercy, and that they may get a name among the living in Jerusalem; and if God portion them with his bairns, their rent is fair, and I hope it shall be so.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, ever in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, Sept. 19, 1632.

LETTER XXI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved Sister in Christ,—Ye shall understand that I have received a letter from Edinburgh, that it is suspected that there will be a General Assembly, or then[1] some meeting of the Bishops; and that at this Synod there will be some commissioners chosen by the Bishop; which news have so taken up my mind, that I am not so settled for studies as I have been before; and, therefore, was never in such fear for the work. But, because it is written to me as a secret, I dare not reveal it to any, but to yourself whom I know: and, therefore, I entreat you, not for any comfort of mine, who am but one man, but for the glory and honor of Jesus Christ, the Master of the banquet, be more earnest with God, and, in general, show others of your Christian acquaintance my fears for myself. I can be content of shame in that work, if my Lord and Master be honored: and, therefore, petition our Lord, especially to see to his own glory, and to give bread to his hungry bairns, howbeit I go hungry away from the feast.

Request Mr. Robert from me, if he come not, to remember us to our Lord.

I have neither time, nor a free disposed mind, to write to you anent[2] your own case. Send me word if all your children and your husband be well. Seeing they are not yours, but your dear Lord's, esteem them but as borrowed, and lay them down at God's feet—your Christ to you is better than they all.

You will pardon my unaccustomed short letter; and remember me, and that honorable feast, to our Lord Jesus. He was with us before: I hope he will not change upon us, but I fear that I have changed upon him—but, Lord! let old kindness stand.

Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Yours, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth.

[1] Otherwise. [2] Concerning.

LETTER XXII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved, and Dear Sister,—My tender affection in Christ remembered—I left you in as great heaviness as I was in since I came to this country; but I know that ye doubt not that (as the truth in Christ is) my soul is knit to your soul, and to the souls of all yours, and would, if I could, send you the largest part of my heart inclosed in this letter. But by fervent calling upon my Lord, I have attained some victory over my heart, which runneth often not knowing whither, and of my beguiling hopes, which I know now better than I did. And I trust in my Lord to hold aloof from the enticings of a seducing heart, by which I am daily cozened; and I mind not, by His grace, who hath called me according to his eternal purpose, to come so far within the grips[1] of my foolish mind, gripping about[2] any folly coming its way, as the woodbine or ivy goeth about the tree.

I adore and kiss the providence of my Lord, who knoweth well what is most expedient for me, and for you, and your children: and I think of you, as of myself, that the Lord, who turneth about, in his deep wisdom, all the wheels and turnings of such changes, will also dispose of that for the best to you and yours. In the presence of my Lord, I am not able, howbeit I would, to conceive amiss of you in that matter. Grace, grace forever upon you and your seed; and it shall be your portion, in despite of all the powers of darkness: do not make more question of this. But the Lord saw a nail in my heart loose, and he hath now fastened it—honor be to his Majesty.

I hear that your son is entered to the school. If I had known of the day, I would have begged from our Lord, that he would have put the book in his hand, with his own hand. I trust in my Lord it is so, and I conceive a hope to see him a star to give light in some room of our Lord's house; and purpose, by the Lord's grace, as I am able, (if our Lord call you to rest before me,) when you are at your home, to do the uttermost of my power to help him every way, in grace and learning, and his brother, and all your children—and I hope that ye would expect that of me.

Further, ye shall know that Mr. William Dalgleish is come home; who saith it is a miracle that your husband, in this process before the Council, escaped both discredit and damage. Let it not be forgotten that he was, in our apprehension, to our grief, cast down and humbled in the Lord's work, in that matter betwixt him and the baillie;[3] now the Lord hath honored him, and made him famous for virtue, honesty, and integrity, two several times,

[1] Grasp. [2] Clasping about.
[3] A magistrate in a Scottish borough, similar to an alderman in England.

before the nobles of this kingdom. Your Lord liveth; we will go to his throne of grace again; his arm is not shortened.

The King is certainly expected. He is feared. We have cause, for our sins, to fear that the Bridegroom shall be taken from us; by our sins, we have rent his fair garments, and we have stirred up and awakened our Beloved. Pray him to tarry, or then[1] to take us with him. It were good that we should knock and rap at the Lord's door: we may not tire to knock oftener than twice or thrice —he knoweth the knock of his friends.

I am still what I was ever to your dear children, tendering their souls' happiness, and praying that grace, grace, grace, mercy and peace from God, even God our Father, and our Lord Jesus, may be their portion; and that now, while they are green and young, their hearts may take band[2] with Jesus, the Corner-stone, and win[3] once in, into our Lord and Saviour's house, and then they will not get leave to flit.

Pray for me, and especially for humility and thankfulness. I have always remembrance of you and your husband, and dear children. The Lord, Jesus, be with your spirit.

Yours evermore, in my dear Lord Jesus, and yours, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XXIII.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved, and Dear Sister,—My love in Christ remembered—God hath brought me home from a place, where I have been exercised with great heaviness; and I have found at home a new matter of heaviness, yet dare not but in all things give thanks.

In my business in Edinburgh, I have not sinned, nor wronged my party, by his own confession, and by the confession of his friends. I have given of my goods for peace, and the saving of my Lord's truth from reproaches, which is dearer to me than all I have. My mother is weak, and I think shall leave me alone; but I am not alone, because Christ's Father is with me.

For your business anent[4] your town, I see great evidences; but Satan and his instruments are against it, and few set their shoulders to Christ's shoulder to help him. But he will do all his lone;[5] and I dare not but exhort you to believe, and persuade you, that the hungry in your city shall be fed; and as for the rest, that want a stomach, the parings of God's loaf will suffice them—and, therefore, believe it shall be well. I may not leave my mother to come and confer with you of all particulars: I have given such

[1] Otherwise.
[2] *To take band*, to unite. Lime is said to take band with the stones in a building when it unites with them.
[3] Get. [4] Concerning. [5] By himself alone.

directions to our dear friend as I can, but the event is in our Lord's hand.

God's Zion abroad flourisheth; and his arm is not shortened with us, if we could believe. There is a scarcity and famine of the word of God, in Edinburgh.

Your sister Jean laboreth mightily in our business; but hath not as yet gotten an answer from J. P. Mr. A. C. will work what he can. My Lady saith she can do little, and that it suiteth not her nor her husband well to speak in such an affair. I told her my mind plainly.

I long to know of your estate. Remember me heartily to your dear husband: grace be the portion of your bairns. I know that you are mindful of the green wound of our sister kirk in Ireland. Bid our Lord lay a plaister to it; he hath good skill to do so, and set others to work.

Grace, grace, upon your soul and body, and all yours.

Yours, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XXIV.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—The cause of my not writing to your Ladyship, is not my forgetfulness of you, but the want of the opportunity of a convenient bearer; for I am under more than a simple obligation to be kind (on paper at least) to your Ladyship.

I bless our Lord, through Christ, who hath brought you home again to your country, from that place, where ye have seen with your eyes that which our Lord's truth taught you before, to wit, that worldly glory is nothing but a vapor, a shadow, the foam of the water, or something less and lighter,—even nothing; and that our Lord hath not without cause said in his word, (1 Cor. vii. 31,) "The countenance or fashion of this world passeth away." In which place our Lord compareth it to an image in a looking-glass, for it is the looking-glass of Adam's sons. Some come to the glass, and see in it the picture of honor, and but a picture indeed, for true honor is to be great in the sight of God; and others see in it the shadow of riches, and but a shadow indeed, for durable riches stand, as one of the maids of Wisdom, upon her left hand, (Prov. iii. 16;) and a third sort see in it the face of painted pleasures, and the beholders will not believe, but the image which they see in this glass is a living man, till the Lord come and break the glass in pieces, and remove the face; and then, like Pharaoh awakened, they say, "And, behold, it was a dream."

I know that your Ladyship thinketh yourself little in the common of[1] this world, for the favorable aspect of any of these three

[1] Under obligation to.

painted faces; and blessed be our Lord that it is so; the better for you, madam; they are not worthy to be wooers to suit[1] in marriage your soul,—that looketh to an higher match than to be married upon painted clay. Know, therefore, madam, that the place whither our Lord Jesus cometh to woo a bride, it is even in the furnace: for if ye be one of Zion's daughters, (which I ever put beyond all question, since I first had occasion to see in your Ladyship such pregnant evidences of the grace of God,) the Lord, who hath his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem, (Isa. xxxi. 9,) is purifying you in the furnace. And, therefore, be content to live in it; and every day to be adding and sewing a passment[2] to your wedding garment, that ye may be at last decored[3] and trimmed as a bride for Christ, a bride of his own busking,[4] beautified in the hidden man of the heart, forgetting your father's house, so shall the King greatly desire your beauty, (Psalm xlv. 11.)

If your Ladyship be not changed, as I hope that ye are not, I believe that ye esteem yourself to be of those whom God hath tried these many years, and refined as silver. But, madam, I shall show your Ladyship a privilege that others want, and which ye have, in this case. Such as are in prosperity, and are fatted with earthly joys, and increased with children and friends, though the word of God is, indeed, written to such, for their instruction; yet to you, who are in trouble, (spare me, madam, to say this,) from whom the Lord hath taken many children, and whom he hath exercised otherwise, there are some chapters, some particular promises in the word of God, made in a most especial manner, which should never have been yours, so as they now are, if ye had had your portion in this life as others have: and, therefore, all the comforts, promises, and mercies, which God offereth to the afflicted, are as so many love-letters written to you: take them to you, madam, and claim your right, and be not robbed. It is no small comfort, that God hath written some scriptures to you which he hath not written to others; ye seem rather, in this, to be envied than pitied; and ye are, indeed, in this, like people of another world, and those that are above the ordinary rank of mankind, whom our King and Lord, our Bridegroom, Jesus, in his love-letter to his well-beloved Spouse, hath named, beside all the rest, and hath written comforts and his hearty commendations, in the lvi. of Isa., ver. 4, 5, and Ps. cxlvii. 2, 3, to you. Read these, and the like, and think that your God is like a friend, who sendeth a letter to a whole house and family, but speaketh in his letter to some, by name, that are dearest to him in the house—ye are then, madam, of the dearest friends of the Bridegroom. If it were lawful, I would envy you, that God honored you so above many of his dear children. Therefore, madam, your part is, in this case, (seeing God taketh nothing from you but that which he is to supply with his own presence,) to desire your Lord to know his own

[1] To urge a suit.
[2] An ornament. *Passments* are strips of lace sewed upon clothes.
[3] Decorated.
[4] Decking.

room, and to take it even upon him to come in, in the room of dead children. "Jehovah, know thy own place, and take it to thee!" is all ye have to say.

Madam, I persuade myself, that this world is to you an uncouth[1] inn: and that ye are like a traveller, who hath his bundle upon his back, and his staff in his hand, and his feet upon the door-threshold. Go forward, honorable and elect Lady, in the strength of your Lord, (let the world bide at home and keep the house,) with your face toward him, who longeth more for a sight of you than ye can do for him. Ere it be long he will see us. I hope to see you laugh as cheerfully after noon, as ye have mourned before noon. The hand of the Lord, the hand of the Lord, be with you in your journey! What have ye to do here? this is not your mountain of rest. Arise then, and set your foot up the mountain; go up out of the wilderness leaning upon the shoulder of your Beloved, (Cant. viii. 5.) If ye knew the welcome that abideth you when ye come home, ye would hasten your pace; for ye shall see your Lord put up his own holy hand to your face, and wipe all tears from your eyes; and I trow that then ye shall have some joy of heart.

Madam, paper willeth me to end, before affection. Remember the estate of Zion. Pray that Jerusalem may be, as Zechariah prophesied, (chap. xii. 3,) a burdensome stone for all; that whosoever boweth down to roll the stone out of the way, may hurt and break the joints of their back, and strain[2] their arms, and disjoint their shoulder-blades: and pray Jehovah, that the stone may lie still in its own place, and keep band[3] with the Corner-stone. I hope it will be so; He is a skilled master-builder who laid it. I should, madam, under great heaviness, be refreshed with two lines from your Ladyship, which I refer to your own wisdom.

Madam, I should seem undutiful not to show you, that great solicitation is made by the town of Kirkcudbright to have the use of my poor labors amongst them. If the Lord will call, and his people cry, who am I to resist? But, without his seen calling, and till the flock, whom I now oversee, be planted with one to whom I dare intrust Christ's Spouse, gold nor silver, nor favor of men, I hope, shall loose me.

I leave your Ladyship, praying more earnestly for grace and mercy to be with you, and multiplied upon you, here and hereafter, than my pen can express.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in the Lord, S. R.

Kirkcudbright.

[1] Strange. [2] Sprain. [3] Continue united.

LETTER XXV.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Having saluted you with grace and mercy from God, our Father, and from our Lord, Jesus Christ—I long both to see your Ladyship, and to hear how it goeth with you.

I do remember you, and present you and your necessities to Him, who is able to keep you, and to present you blameless before his face with joy: and my prayer to our Lord is, that ye may be sick of love for Him, who died of love for you, I mean your Saviour, Jesus:—And, oh! sweet were that sickness, to be soul-sick for him! and a living death it were to die in the fire of the love of that Soul-lover, Jesus! And, madam, if ye love him, ye will keep his commandments; and this is not one of the least, to lay your neck cheerfully and willingly under the yoke of Jesus Christ: for I trust that your Ladyship did first contract and bargain with the Son of God, to follow him upon these terms, that by his grace ye should endure hardship, and suffer affliction as the soldier of Christ. They are not worthy of Jesus, who will not take a blow for their Master's sake. As for our glorious Peace-maker, when he came to make up the friendship betwixt God and us, God bruised him, and struck him, the sinful world, also, did beat him, and crucify him; yet he took buffets of both the parties: and—honor to our Lord, Jesus!—he would not leave the field for all that, till he had made peace betwixt the parties. I persuade myself that your sufferings are but like your Saviour's, (yea, incomparably less and lighter,) which are called but a bruising of his heel, (Gen. iii. 15,) a wound far from the heart. Your life is hid with Christ, in God, (Col. iii. 3,) and, therefore, ye cannot be robbed of it. Our Lord handleth us as fathers do their young children. They lay up jewels in a place above the reach of the short arms of bairns, else bairns would put up their hands, and take them down. and lose them soon. So hath our Lord done with our spiritual life. Jesus Christ is the high coffer, in the which our Lord hath hid our life; we, children, are not able to reach up our arm so high as to take down that life and lose it; it is in our Christ's hand. Oh long, long may Jesus be lord-keeper of our life! and happy are they that can, with the Apostle, (2 Tim. i.) lay their soul in pawn in the hand of Jesus; for he is able to keep that which is committed in pawn to him against that day. Then, madam, so long as this life is not hurt, all other troubles are but touches in the heel. I trust that ye shall soon be cured.

Ye know, madam, that kings have some servants in their courts who receive not present wages in their hand, but live upon their hopes: the King of kings, also, hath servants in his court, that, for the present, get little or nothing, but the heavy cross of Christ, troubles without, and terrors within; but they live upon hope, and

when it cometh to the parting of the inheritance, they remain in the house as heirs: it is better to be so than to get present payment, and a portion in this life, an inheritance in this world, (God forgive me, that I should honor it with the name of an inheritance, it is rather a farm-room,[1]) and then in the end to be casten[2] out of God's house, with this word, "Ye have received your consolation, ye shall get no more." Alas! what get they? The rich glutton's heaven. Oh, but our Lord, (Luke xvi.) maketh it a silly[3] heaven! He fared well, (saith our Lord,) and delicately every day. Oh, no more? a silly heaven! Truly no more, except that he was clothed in purple, and that is all. I persuade myself, madam, that ye have joy when ye think that our Lord hath dealt more graciously with your soul. Ye have gotten little in this life, it is true, indeed: ye have, then, the more to crave; yea, ye have all to crave; for, except some tastings of the first fruits, and some kisses of His mouth, whom your soul loveth, ye get no more. But I cannot tell you what is to come; yet I may speak as our Lord doth of it. The foundation of the City is pure gold, clear as crystal: the twelve ports are set with precious stones: if orchards and rivers commend a soil upon earth, there is a paradise there, wherein groweth the Tree of Life that beareth twelve manner of fruits every month, which is seven-score and four harvests in the year: and there is there a pure river of water of life, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb: and the city hath no need of the light of the sun, or moon, or of a candle; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof. Madam, believe and hope for this, till ye see and enjoy. Jesus is saying in the Gospel, "Come and see; and he is come down in the chariot of truth, wherein he rideth through the world, to conquer men's souls, (Ps. xlv. 4,) and is now in the world, saying, "Who will go with me? Will ye go? My Father will make you welcome, and give you house-room; for in my Father's house are many dwelling-places." Madam, consent to go with him.

Thus I rest, commending you to God's dearest mercy.

Yours, in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XXVI.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I am afraid now, (as many others are,) that at the sitting down of our Parliament, the Spouse of our Lord Jesus shall be roughly handled; and it must be so, since false and declining Scotland, whom our Lord took off the dunghill, and out of hell, and made a fair bride to himself, hath broken her faith to her sweet Husband, and hath put on the forehead of a whore; and,

[1] A rented room. [2] Cast. [3] Poor, contemptible.

therefore, he saith that he will remove. Would to God, we could stir up ourselves to lay hold upon Him, who, being highly provoked with the handling he hath met with, is ready to depart! Alas, we do not importune him, by prayer and supplication, to abide amongst us! If we could but weep upon him, and, in the holy pertinacy[1] of faith, wrestle with him, and say, "We will not let thee go;" it might be that then He, who is easy to be entreated, would yet, notwithstanding our high provocations, condescend to stay, and feed among the lilies, till that fair and desirable day break, and the shadows flee away. Ah! what cause of mourning is there, when our gold is become dim, and the visage of our Nazarites, sometimes[2] whiter than snow, is become blacker than a coal; and Levi's house, once comparable to fine gold, is now changed, and become like vessels in which he hath no pleasure! Madam, think upon this, that when our Lord, who hath his handkerchief to wipe the face of the mourners in Zion, shall come to wipe away all tears from their eyes, he may wipe yours also, in passing, amongst others. I am confident, madam, that our Lord will yet build a new house to himself of our rejected and scattered stones; for our Bridegroom cannot want a wife. Can he live a widower? Nay he will embrace both us, the Little young Sister, and the Elder Sister, the Church of the Jews; and there will yet be a day of it: and, therefore, we have cause to rejoice, yea, to sing and shout for joy. The Church hath been, since the world began, ever hanging by a small thread, and all the hands of Hell and of the wicked have been drawing at the thread; but, God be thanked, they only break their arms by pulling, but the thread is not broken, for the sweet fingers of Christ our Lord have spun and twisted it. —Lord, hold the thread whole!

Madam, stir up your husband, to lay hold upon the covenant, and to do good. What hath he to do with the world? It is not his inheritance: desire him to make home-over,[3] and put-to his hand to lay one stone or two upon the wall of God's house, before he go hence. I have heard also, madam, that your child is removed; but to have or want is best, as He pleaseth. Whether she be with you, or in God's keeping, think it all one; nay, think it the better of the two by far, that she is with him. I trust in our Lord, that there is something laid up and kept for you; for our kind Lord, who hath wounded you, will not be so cruel, as not to allay the pain of your green wound; and, therefore, claim Christ still as your own, and own him as your One thing.

So resting, I commend your Ladyship, your soul and spirit, in pawn to Him, who keepeth his Father's pawns, and will make an account of them faithfully, even to that Fairest amongst the sons of men, our sweet Lord, Jesus, the fairest, the sweetest, the most delicious Rose in all his Father's great field. The smell of that Rose perfume your soul!

Your Ladyship's, in his sweetest Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, April 1, 1633.

[1] Pertinacity. [2] Formerly. [3] Homewards.

LETTER XXVII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

DEAR SISTER,—I longed much to have conferred with you at this time. I am grieved at anything in your house that grieveth you, and shall, by my Lord's grace, suit[1] my Lord to help you to bear your burden, and to come in behind you, and give you and your burdens a putt[2] up the mountain. Know you not that Christ wooeth his wife in the furnace, (Isa. xlviii. 10,) "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. He casteth his love on you when ye are in the furnace of affliction: ye might, indeed, be casten down, if he brought you in and left you there; but when he leadeth you through the waters, think ye not that he has a sweet soft hand? You know his love grip[3] already: you shall be delivered; wait on: Jesus will make a road, and come and fetch home the captive: ye shall not die in prison, but your strokes are such as were your Husband's, who was wounded in the house of his friends—strokes were not newings[4] to him, and neither are they to you. But your winter-night is near spent; it is near-hand[5] the dawning. I shall see you leap for joy. The Kirk shall be delivered; this wilderness shall bud and grow up like a rose; Christ got a charter of Scotland from his Father, and who will bereave him of his heritage, or put our Redeemer out of his mailing,[6] until his tack[7] be run out?

I must have you praying for me; I am black-shamed[8] for evermore with Christ's goodness; and in private, on the 17th and 18th of August, I got a full answer of my Lord, to be a graced minister, and a chosen arrow hidden in his own quiver. But know that this assurance is not kept but by watching and prayer; and, therefore, dear mistress, help me. I have gotten now—honor to my Lord!—the gate[9] to open the slot,[10] and shute[11] the bar of his door; and I think it easy to get anything from the King by prayer, and to use holy violence with him. Christ was in Carsphairn Kirk, and opened the people's hearts wonderfully: Jesus is looking up that water,[12] and minting[13] to dwell amongst them. I would that we could give him his welcome-home to the Muirs.[14] Now peace and grace be upon you, and all yours.

Yours, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, August 20, 1633.

1 Urge. 2 A strong push. 3 Grasp.
4 Novelties. 5 Near. 6 Farm.
7 Lease. 8 Utterly ashamed. 9 Way.
10 A bar running from one side of a door to the other, and let, at both ends, into the wall. 11 Push aside. 12 River.
13 Intimating by signs, an intention. 14 A district of healthy uplands.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I determined, and was desirous, also, to have seen your Ladyship, but, because of a pain in my arm, I could not. I know that ye will not impute it to any unsuitable forgetfulness of your Ladyship, from whom, at my first entry to my calling in this country, and since also, I received such comfort in my affliction as I trust in God never to forget, and shall labor, by his grace, to recompense in the only way possible to me, and that is, by presenting your soul, person, house, and all your necessities, in prayer to Him, whose I hope you are, and who is able to keep you till that day of appearance, and to present you before his face with joy.

I am confident that your Ladyship is going forward in the begun journey to your Lord and Father's home and Kingdom; howbeit, ye want not temptations within and without. And who, among the saints, hath ever taken that castle without stroke of sword? the Chief of the house, our Elder Brother, our Lord Jesus, not being excepted, who won his own house at home, due to him by birth, with much blood and many blows. Your Ladyship hath the more need to look to yourself, because our Lord hath placed you higher than the rest, and your way to Heaven lieth through a more wild and waste wilderness than the way of many of your fellow-travellers, not only through the midst of this wood of thorns, the cumbersome world, but also through these dangerous paths, the vain-glory of it—the consideration whereof hath often moved me to pity your soul, and the soul of your worthy and noble husband. And it is more to you to win[1] Heaven, being ships of greater burden, and in the main sea, than for little vessels, that are not so much in the mercy and reverence of the storms, because they may come quietly to their port by launching along the coast; for the which cause ye do much, if, in the midst of such a tumult of business and crowd of temptations, ye shall give Christ Jesus his own court,[2] and his own due place in your soul. I know and am persuaded that that lovely One, Jesus, is dearer to you than many kingdoms; and that ye esteem him your Well-beloved, and the Standard-bearer among ten thousand. (Cant. v. 10.) And it becometh him full well to take the place, and the board-head in your soul, before all the world. I knew and saw him with you in the furnace of affliction—for there he wooed you to himself, and chose you to be his; and now he craveth no other hire of you but your love, and that he get no cause to be jealous of you. And, therefore, dear and worthy Lady, be like to the fresh river, that keepeth its own fresh taste in the salt sea. This world is not worthy of your soul; give it not a good-day, when Christ cometh into

[1] Reach. [2] Influence.

competition with it. Be like one of another country. Home! and stay not; for the sun is fallen low, and nigh the tops of the mountains, and the shadows are stretched out in great length. Linger not by the way. The world and sin would train you on, and make you turn aside: leave not the way for them,—and the Lord Jesus be at the voyage!

Madam, many eyes are upon you, and many would be glad that your Ladyship should spill[1] a Christian, and mar a good professor. Lord Jesus, mar their godless desires, and keep the conscience whole without a crack! If there be a hole in it, so that it take in water at a leck,[2] it will with difficulty mend again. It is a dainty delicate creature, and a rare piece of the workmanship of your Maker; and, therefore, deal gently with it, and keep it entire, that, amidst this world's glory, your Ladyship may learn to entertain Christ; and that whatsoever creature your Ladyship findeth not to smell of him may have no better relish to you than the white of an egg.

Madam, it is a part of the truth of your profession to drop words into the ears of your noble husband continually of eternity, judgment, death, Hell, Heaven, the honorable profession, the sins of his father's house. He must reckon with God for his father's debt; forgetting of accounts payeth not debt; nay, the interest of a forgotten bond runneth up with God to interest upon interest. I know that he looketh homeward, and loveth the truth; but I pity him with my soul, because of his many temptations. Satan layeth upon men a burden of cares above a load, and maketh a pack-horse of men's souls, when they are wholly set upon this world. We owe the Devil no such service. It were wisdom to throw off that load into a mire, and cast all our cares over upon God.

Madam, think that ye have no child. Subscribe a bond to your Lord, that she shall be his, if he take her; and thanks, and praise, and glory to his holy name shall be the interest for a year's loan of her. Look for crosses; and, while it is fair weather, mend the sails of the ship.

Now, hoping that your Ladyship will pardon my tediousness, I commend your soul and person to the grace and mercy of our sweet Lord, Jesus, in whom I am

Your Ladyship's, at all dutiful obedience in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, Nov 15, 1633.

LETTER XXIX.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—Having received a letter from some of the worthiest of the ministry in this kingdom, the contents whereof I am de-

[1] Spoil. [2] Leak.

sired to communicate to such professors, in these parts, as, I know, love the beauty of Zion, and are afflicted to see the Lord's vineyard trodden under foot by the wild boars out of the wood, which lay it waste, I could not but also desire your Ladyship's help to join with the rest, desiring you to impart it to my Lord, your husband; and, if ye think it needful, I shall write to his Lordship, as Mr. G. G. shall advertise me.

Know, therefore, that the best affected of the ministry have thought it convenient and necessary, at such a time as this, that all who love the truth should join their prayers together, and cry to God with humiliation and fasting. The times, which are agreed upon, are the first two sabbaths of February next, and the six days intervening betwixt these sabbaths, as they may conveniently be had, and the first sabbath of every quarter:—and the causes, as they are written to me, are these—

I. Besides the distresses of the reformed churches abroad, the many reigning sins of uncleanness, ungodliness, and unrighteousness in this land: the present judgments on the land, and many more hanging over us, whereof few are sensible, or yet know the right and true cause of them.

II. The lamentable and pitiful estate of a glorious Church, (in so short a time, and against so many bonds,) in doctrine, sacrament, and discipline, so sore persecuted, in the persons of faithful pastors and professors, and the door of God's house kept so strait, by bastard porters, in so much that worthy instruments, able for the work, are held at the door: the rulers having turned over religion into policy, and the multitude ready to receive any religion that shall be enjoined by authority.

III. In our humiliation, besides that we are under a necessity of deprecating God's wrath, and vowing to God sincerely new obedience, the weakness, coldness, silence, and lukewarmness of some of the best of the ministry, and the deadness of professors, who have suffered the truth both secretly to be stolen away, and openly to be plucked from us, should be confessed.

IV. Atheism, idolatry, profanity, and vanity should be confessed; our King's heart recommended to God; and God entreated that he would stir up the nobles, and the people to turn from their evil ways.

Thus, madam, hoping that your Ladyship will join with others, that such a work be not slighted at such a necessary time, when our Kirk is at the overturning, I shall promise to myself your help, as the Lord, in secrecy and prudence will enable you, that your Ladyship may rejoice with the Lord's people when deliverance shall come; for true and sincere humiliation cometh always speed[1] with God:—and when authority, King, court, and churchmen oppose the truth, what other armor have we than prayer and faith? whereby, if we wrestle with him, there is ground to hope that those who would remove the burdensome Stone out

[1] Is successful.

of its place, shall but hurt their back, and the Stone shall not be moved, at least, not removed, (Zech. xii. 3.)

Grace, grace be with you from Him, who hath called you to the inheritance of the saints in light.

Your Ladyship's,

At all submissive obedience in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, Jan. 23, 1634.

LETTER XXX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered—I am in care, and fear for this work of our Lord's, now near approaching, because of the danger of the time, and I dare not for my soul be silent to see my Lord's house burning and not cry, "Fire! fire!" therefore, seek from our Lord wisdom spiritual, and not black policy, to speak with liberty our Lord's truth. I am cast down, and would fain have access and presence to the King that day, even howbeit I should break up iron doors. I believe that you will not forget me; and you will desire Jean Brown, Thomas Carson, and Marion Carson, to help me. Pray for well-cooked meat, and a heartsome[1] Saviour, with joy crying, "Welcome, in my Father's name!"

I am confident that Zion shall be well: the bush shall burn and not consume, for the good-will of Him that dwelleth in the bush. But the Lord is making on a fire[2] in Jerusalem, and purposeth to blow the bellows, and to melt the tin and brass, and to bring out a fair beautiful bride of the furnace, that will be married over again upon the new Husband, and sing as in the days of her youth, when the contract of marriage is written over again. But I fear that the Bride be hidden for a time from the Dragon, that pursueth the woman with child; but what, howbeit we go lurk in the wilderness for a time? for the Lord will take his Kirk to the wilderness and speak to her heart.

Nothing casteth me down, but only that I fear the Lord will cast down the shepherds' tents, and feed his own in a secret place; but let us, however matters frame, cast over the affairs of the Bride upon the Bridegroom; the government is upon his shoulders, and he dow[3] bear us all well enough. That fallen star, the Prince of the Bottomless Pit, knoweth it is near the time when he shall be tormented; and now in his evening he hath gathered his armies to win one battle or two, in the edge of the evening[4] at the sun's going down. And when our Lord has been watering his vineyards in France, and Germany, and Bohemia, how can we think ourselves Christ's Sister, if we be not like him, and our other

[1] Cheerful.
[2] *To make on a fire*, put the fuel in order.
[3] Is able.
[4] Twilight.

great sisters? I cannot but think, seeing the ends of the earth are given to Christ, Ps. ii. 8, and Scotland is the end of the earth, (and so we are in Christ's charter-tailzie,[1]) that our Lord will keep his possession. We fall by promise and law to Christ: he wan us with the sweat of his brows, (if I may say so,) his Father promised him his life-rent of Scotland. Glory, glory to our King; long may he wear his Crown! O Lord, let us never see another King![2] Oh, let him come down like rain upon the new-mown grass!

I had you in remembrance on Saturday last, in the morning, in a great measure, and was brought thrice on end, in remembrance of you in my prayer to God.

Grace, grace be your portion.

Yours, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, March 2, 1634.

LETTER XXXI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered—please you to understand that, to my grief, our communion is delayed till Sabbath come eight days; for the Laird and Lady have earnestly desired me to delay it, because the Laird is sick, and he feareth he be not able to travel, because he hath lately taken physic. The Lord bless that work. Commend it to God, as you love me: for I love not Satan's thorns cast in the Lord's way. The Lord rebuke him. I trust in God's mercy that Satan has gotten but a delay, but no free discharge that his Kingdom shall not be hurt. Commend the Laird to your God. I pray you to advertise your people, that they be not disappointed in coming hither. Show such of them as you love in Christ, from me, that Jesus Christ will be welcomer when he cometh, in that he has sharpened their desires for eight days' space. Your daughter is well, I hope, every way. Forget not God's Kirk; they are but bastards, and not sons and daughters, that mourn not for Zion. Lord, hear us!

No further. Jesus Christ be with your spirit. I shall remember you, and your new house.

Lord Jesus, go from the one house to the other!

Yours, at all power in the Lord, S. R.

Anwoth.

[1] Charter of entail.

[2] That is, in spiritual matters, for Rutherford, as appears from these Letters, was a most loyal subject to his earthly king.

LETTER XXXII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WELL-BELOVED SISTER,—My old and dearest love in Christ remembered—Know that I have been visiting my Lady Kenmure. Her child is with the Lord. I entreat you to visit her, and desire the Good-wife[1] of Barcapple to visit her, and Knockbrex, if you see him in the town. My Lord, her husband, is absent, and I think that she will be heavy.

You know what Mr. W. Dalgleish and I desired you to deal for, at my Lord Kirkcudbright's hand. Send me word if you obtained anything at my Lord's hands, anent the giving up of our names to the High Commission; for I hear it is not for nothing that the Bishop hath taken that course. Our Lord knoweth best what is good for an old Kirk, that is fallen from her first love, and hath forgotten her Husband, days without number. A trial is like to come on; but I am sure, that our Husbandman, Christ, shall lose chaff, but no corn at all. Yet there is a dry wind coming, but neither to fan nor to purge. Happy are they who are not blown away with the chaff: for we shall but suffer temptation for ten days: but those who are faithful to the death shall receive the crown of life. I hear daily what hath been spoken of myself most unjustly and falsely; and no marvel, the Dragon, with the swing of his tail, hath made the third part of the stars to fall from Heaven, and the fallen would have many to fall with them. If ever Satan was busy, now, when he knoweth that his time is but short, he is busy. Yet a little while, and He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry. I know, that, ere it be long, the Lord will come, and red all pleas[2] betwixt us and his enemies. Now, welcome Lord Jesus, go fast!

Send me word about Grizzel, your daughter, whom I remember in Christ; and desire her to cast herself into His arms, who was born of a woman, and, being the Ancient of days, was made a young weeping Child. It was not for nothing that our Brother, Jesus, was an infant. It was, that he might pity infant believers, who were to come out of the womb into the world. I believe that our Lord Jesus will be waiting on with mercy, mercy, mercy to the end of that battle, and bring her through with life and peace, and a sign of God's favor. I shall expect advertisement from you, and especially if you fear her.

Mistress, you remember that I said to you, anent[3] your love to me and my brother, begun in Christ; ye know that we are here but strangers, and you have not yet found us a dry well, as others

[1] *Good-man*, and *good-wife* were species of titles in former times in Scotland, indicating that the persons thus designated were among the most respectable of the smaller proprietors of land, or of the yeomanry, both for wealth and worth.

[2] Settle all disputes, by deciding which party is in the wrong. [3] Touching.

have been. Be not overcome of any suspicion; I trust in God that the Lord, who knit us together, will keep us together. It is time now that the lambs of Jesus should all run together, when the wolf is barking at them: yet I know, that, ere God's bairns want a cross, their love amongst themselves shall be a cross; but our Lord giveth love for another end. I know that ye will with love cover infirmities; and our Lord give you wisdom in all things. I think love hath broad shoulders, and will bear many things, and yet neither faint, nor sweat, nor fall under the burden.

Commend me to your husband, and dear Grizzel. I think on her: Lord Jesus be in the furnace with her, and then she shall but smoke, and not burn. Desire Mr. Robert to excuse my not seeing of him at his house; I have my own reasons therefor.[1]

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, April 25, 1634.

LETTER XXXIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—All submissive and dutiful obedience in our Lord, Jesus, remembered,—I trust that I need not much entreat your Ladyship to look to Him, who hath stricken you at this time; but my duty, in the memory of that comfort which I found in your Ladyship's kindness, when I was no less heavy, in a case not unlike that, speaketh to me, to say something now; and I wish I could ease your Ladyship at least with words. I am persuaded that your Physician will not slay you, but purge you; and seeing he calleth himself the Chirurgeon, who maketh the wound and bindeth it up again, (for to lance a wound is not to kill, but to cure the patient,) (Deut. xxxii. 39, 1 Sam. v. 6, Job vi. 18, Hos. vi. 1,) I believe that faith will teach you to kiss a striking Lord, and so to acknowledge the sovereignty of God, in the death of a child, to be above the power of us mortal men, who may pluck up a flower in the bud, and not be blamed for it. If our dear Lord pluck up one of his roses, and pull down sour and green fruit before the harvest, who can challenge him: for he sendeth us to his world, as men to a market, wherein some stay many hours, and eat and drink, and buy and sell, and pass through the fair, till they be weary; and such are those who live long, and get a hearty fill of this life: and others again come slipping in to the morning market, and do neither sit nor stand, nor buy nor sell, but look about them a little, and pass presently home again; and these are infants and young ones, who end their short market in the morning, and get but a short view of the fair. Our Lord, who hath numbered man's months, and set him bounds that he cannot

[1] For it.

pass, (Job xiv. 5,) hath written the length of our market; and it is easier to complain of the decree than to change it.

I verily believe, when I write this, that your Lord hath taught your Ladyship to lay your hand on your mouth: but I shall be far from desiring your Ladyship or any others to cast by[1] a cross, like an old useless bill, that is only for the fire; but would rather wish that each cross were looked in the face seven times, and were read over and over again. It is the messenger of the Lord, and speaketh something; and the man of understanding will hear the rod, and Him that hath appointed it. Try what is the taste of the Lord's cup, and drink with God's blessing, that ye may grow thereby. I trust in God that whatever speech it utter to your soul, this is one word in it, (Job v. 17,) "Behold, blessed is the man whom God correcteth:" and that it saith to you, "Ye are from home while here: ye are not of this world, as your Redeemer, Christ, was not of this world." There is something keeping for you, which is worth the having. All that is here is condemned to die, to pass away like a snow-ball before a summer-sun; and since death took first possession of yours, it hath been and daily is creeping nearer and nearer to yourself, howbeit with no noise of feet. Your Husbandman, and Lord, hath lopped off some branches already; the tree itself is to be transplanted to the high garden.—In a good time be it—our Lord ripen your Ladyship. All these crosses, (and indeed when I remember them, they are heavy and many—peace, peace be the end of them!) are to make you white and ripe for the Lord's harvest hook.[2] I have seen the Lord weaning you from the breasts of this world. It was never his mind that it should be your patrimony, and God be thanked for that; ye look the liker one of the heirs. Let the movables go,—why not? they are not yours,—fasten your grips[3] upon the heritage; and our Lord, Jesus, make the charters sure,—and give your Ladyship to grow as a palm tree on God's Mount Zion; howbeit shaken with winds, yet the root is fast.

This is all I can do, to recommend your case to your Lord, who hath you written upon the palms of his hands. If I were able to do more, your Ladyship may believe me, that gladly I would. I trust shortly to see your Ladyship. Now He, who hath called you, confirm and establish your heart in grace unto the day of the liberty of the sons of God.

Your Ladyship's,

At all submissive obedience in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, April 29, 1634.

[1] Aside. [2] Sickle. [3] Gripe.

LETTER XXXIV.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved Mistress,—My love in Christ remembered—I hear this day that your town is to choose a commissioner for the Parliament, and I was written to from Edinburgh, to see that good men should be chosen in your bounds: and I have heard, this day, that Robert Glendonning, or John Ewart, look to be chosen. I beseech you to see that this be not. The Lord's cause craveth other witnesses to speak for him than such men; and, therefore, let it not be said that Kirkcudbright, which is spoken of in this kingdom for their religion, hath sent a man to be their mouth that will speak against Christ. Such a time as this will not fall out once in half an age. I would entreat your husband to take it upon him; it is an honorable and necessary service for Christ; and show him that I wrote unto you for that effect. I fear that William Glendonning hath not skill and authority. I am in great heaviness. Pray for me; for we must take our life in our hand in this ill time. Let us stir up ourselves to lay our Lord's Bride, and her wrongs, before our Husband and Lord.

Lord Jesus be with your spirit!

Yours, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, May 20.

LETTER XXXV.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

My very Noble and Worthy Lady,—So oft as I call to mind the comforts that I myself, a poor friendless stranger, received from your Ladyship here in a strange part of the country, when my Lord took from me the Delight of mine eyes, as the word speaketh in Ezek. xxiv. 16, (which wound is not yet fully healed and cured,) I trust your Lord will remember that, and give you comfort now, at such a time as this, wherein your dearest Lord hath made you a widow, that ye may be a free woman for Christ, who is now suiting for marriage-love of you; and, therefore, since you lye alone in your bed, let Christ be as a bundle of myrrh, to sleep and lye all the night betwixt your breasts, (Cant. i. 13,) and then your bed is better filled than before. And, seeing that among all crosses spoken of in our Lord's word, this giveth you a particular right to make God your Husband, (who was not so yours while your husband was alive,) read God's mercy out of this visitation. And, albeit I must out of some experience say, that the mourning for the husband of your youth be, by God's own mouth, the heaviest worldly sorrow, (Joel i. 8,) and, though

this be the weightiest burden that ever lay upon your back, yet ye know when the fields are emptied, and your husband now asleep in the Lord, if ye will wait upon Him, who hideth his face for awhile, that it lyeth upon God's honor and truth to fill the field, and to be a husband to the widow. See, and consider, then, what ye have lost, and how little it is. Therefore, madam, let me entreat you in the bowels of Christ Jesus, and by the comforts of his Spirit and your appearance before him, let God, and men, and angels, now see what is in you. The Lord hath pierced the vessel, it will be known whether there be in it wine or water: let your faith and patience be seen, that it may be known that your only beloved, first and last, hath been Christ: and, therefore, now, were your whole love upon him, that he alone is a suitable object for your love and all the affections of your soul. God hath dried up one channel of your love, by the removal of your husband: let now that spait[1] run upon Christ. Your Lord and Lover hath graciously taken out your husband's name, and your name, out of the summonses, that are raised at the instance of the terrible sin-revenging Judge of the world, against the House of Kenmure.

And I dare say that God's hammering of you from your youth, is only to make you a fair carved stone, in the high upper temple of the New Jerusalem. Your Lord never thought this world's vain-painted glory a gift worthy of you; and, therefore, would not bestow you, because he is to propine[2] you with a better portion. Let the movables go, the inheritance is yours. Ye are a child of the house, and joy is laid up for you. It is long in coming, but not the worse for that. I am now expecting to see, and that with joy and comfort, that which I hoped of you, since I knew you fully; even that ye have laid such strength upon the Holy One of Israel, that ye defy troubles; and that your soul is a castle that may be besieged, but cannot be taken. What have you to do here? This world never looked like a friend upon you. Ye owe it little love, it looked ever sour-like upon you; howbeit ye should woo it, it will not match with you; and, therefore, never seek warm fire under cold ice. This is not a field where your happiness groweth; it is up above, where (Rev. vii. 9,) there are a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands:—what ye could never get here, ye shall find there. And withal consider, how in all these trials (and truly they have been many) your Lord hath been loosing you at the root from perishing things, and hunting after you, to grip[3] your soul. Madam, for the sake of the Son of God, let him not miss his grip,[4] but stay and abide in the love of God, as Jude saith, (verse 21.)

Now, madam, I hope that your Ladyship will take these lines in good part; and wherein I have fallen short and failed to your Ladyship, in not evidencing what I was obliged to your more than

[1] Flood. [2] Present. [3] Catch. [4] Grasp.

deserved love and respect, I request a full pardon for it. Again, my dear and noble Lady, let me beseech you to lift up your head, for the day of your redemption draweth near; and remember that that star which shined in Galloway is now shining in another world. Now I pray that God may answer his own style to your soul; and that he may be to you the God of all consolations.

Thus I remain your Ladyship's,

At all dutiful obedience in the Lord, S. R.

Anwoth, Sept. 14, 1634.

LETTER XXXVI.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

MISTRESS,—My dearest love in Christ remembered—I entreat you to charge your soul to return to rest, and to glorify your dearest Lord in believing: and know that, for the good-will of Him, that dwelleth in the bush, the burning Kirk shall not be consumed to ashes: but, (Deut. xxxiii. 16,) "Blessing shall come on the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him who was separated from his brethren." And are not the saints separated from their brethren, and sold, and hated? for, (Gen. xlix. 23,) "The archers have sorely grieved Joseph, and shot at him, and hated him." (Ver. 24,) "But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob: from him is the Shepherd and the Stone of Israel." The Stone of Israel shall not be broken in pieces. It is hammered upon by the children of this world, and we shall live, and not die. Our Lord hath done all this, to see if we will believe, and not give over; and I am persuaded that ye must of necessity stick by your work. The eye of Christ hath been upon all this business; and he taketh good heed, too, who is for him and who is against him. Let us do our part, as we would be approved of Christ. The Son of God is near to his enemies; if they were not deaf, they may hear the din of his feet: and he will come with a start, upon his weeping bairns, and take them on his knee, and lay their head in his bosom, and dry their watery eyes—and this day is fast coming. Yet a little time, and the vision will speak, it will not tarry, (Hab. ii.) These questions betwixt us and our adversaries shall all be decided in yonder day, when the Son of God will come and red all pleas;[1] and it shall be seen whether we or they have been for Christ, and who have been pleading for Baal. It is not known what we are now: but when our Life shall appear in glory, then we shall see who laugheth fastest that day; therefore, we must possess our souls in patience, and go into our chamber, and rest until the indignation be past. We shall not weep long, when our Lord will take us up in the day that he gathereth his jewels: and,

[1] Settle all disputes, by deciding which party is in the wrong.

(Mal. iii. 16,) "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name."

And I shall never be of another faith, than that our Lord is heating a furnace for the enemies of his Kirk in Scotland. It is true that the Spouse of Christ hath played the harlot, and hath left her first Husband; and the enemies think that they offend not, for we have sinned against the Lord, but they shall get the Devil to their thanks. The rod shall be cast into the fire, that we may sing as in the days of our youth. My dear friend, therefore, lay down your head upon Christ's breast: weep not, the Lion of the tribe of Judah will arise. The sun is gone down on the prophets, and our gold is become dim; and the Lord feedeth his people with waters of gall and wormwood; yet Christ standeth but behind the wall, his bowels are moved for Scotland: he waiteth, (as Isaiah saith,) that he may show mercy. If we could go home, and take our brethren with us, weeping with our faces toward Zion, asking the way thitherward, he would bring back our captivity. We may not think that God has no care of his own honor, while men tread it under their feet; he will clothe himself with vengeance, as with a cloak, and appear against our enemies for our deliverance. Ye were never yet beguiled, and God will not now begin with you. Wrestle still with the Angel of the covenant, and you shall get the blessing: fight, he delighteth to be overcome by wrestling.

Commend me to Grizzel. Desire her to learn to know the adversaries of the Lord, and to take them as her adversaries; and to learn to know the right gate[1] in to the Son of God! Oh, but acquaintance with the Son of God, to say, "My Well-beloved is mine, and I am his," is a sweet and glorious course of life, that none know but those who are sealed and marked in the forehead with Christ's mark, and the new name that Christ writeth upon his own.

Grace, grace and mercy be with you.

Yours, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, Sept. 25, 1634.

LETTER XXXVII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—All dutiful obedience in our Lord remembered—I know that ye are, now, near one of those straits in which ye have been before: but, because your outward comforts are fewer, I pray Him, whose ye are, to supply what ye want, another way. For, howbeit we cannot win[2] to the bottom of His wise providence,

[1] Way. [2] Reach.

who ruleth all; yet it is certain that this is not only good, which the Almighty hath done, but that it is best: and he hath reckoned all your steps to Heaven; and if your Ladyship were through this water, there are the fewer behind; and, if this were the last, I hope that your Ladyship hath learned by on-waiting to make your acquaintance with death, which, being to the Lord, the woman's Seed, Jesus, only a bloody heel, and not a broken head, (Gen. iii. 15,) cannot be ill to his friends, who get far less of death than himself. Therefore, madam, seeing ye know not but that the journey is ended, and that ye are come to the water-side, in God's wisdom, look all your papers and your counts, and whether ye be ready to receive the Kingdom of Heaven as a little child, in whom there is little haughtiness, and much humility. I would be far from discouraging your Ladyship; but there is an absolute necessity, that, near eternity, we look ere we leap, seeing no man winneth[1] back again to mend his leap. I am confident that your Ladyship thinketh often upon it, and that your old Guide will go before you and take your hand—his love to you will not grow sour, nor wear out of date, as the love of men, which groweth old and gray-headed often before themselves. Ye have so much the more reason to love a better life than this, because this world hath been to you a cold fire, with little heat to the body, and as little light, and much smoke to hurt the eyes. But, madam, your Lord would have you thinking it but dry breasts, full of wind, and empty of food. In this late visitation that hath befallen your Ladyship, ye have seen God's love and care, in such a measure, that I thought our Lord brake the sharp point off the cross, and made us, and your Ladyship see Christ take possession and infeftment upon earth of Him, who is now reigning and triumphing with the hundred and forty and four thousand, who stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion. I know that the sweetest of it is bitter to you; but your Lord will not give you painted crosses. He pareth not all the bitterness from the cross, neither taketh he the sharp edge quite from it; then[2] it should be of your waling[3] and not of his, which would have as little reason in it, as it would have profit for us. Only, madam, God commandeth you now to believe, and cast anchor in the dark night, and climb up the mountain. He who hath called you, establish you and confirm you to the end.

I had a purpose to have visited your Ladyship; but when I thought better upon it, the truth is, I could not see what my company could profit you: and this hath broken off my purpose, and no other thing. I know that many honorable friends and worthy professors will see your Ladyship; and that the Son of God is with you, to whose love and mercy, from my soul, I commend your Ladyship, and remain, Your Ladyship's,

At all dutiful obedience, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, Nov. 29, 1634.

[1] Getteth. [2] For in that case. [3] Selecting.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—My humble obedience in the Lord remembered—know that it hath pleased the Lord to let me see, by all appearance, my labors, in God's house here, are at an end; and I must now learn to suffer, in the which I am a dull scholar. By a strange providence, some of my papers anent the corruptions of this time are come to our King's hand. I know that by the wise and well-affected I shall be censured, as not wise nor circumspect enough; but it is ordinary that that should be a part of the cross of those who suffer for Him. Yet I love and pardon the instrument; I would commit my life to him, howbeit by him this hath befallen me—but I look higher than to him.

I make no question of your Ladyship's love and care to do what ye can for my help; and I am persuaded that in my adversities your Ladyship will wish me well. I seek no other thing than that my Lord may be honored by me in giving a testimony. I was willing to do him more service; but seeing he will have no more of my labors, and this Land will thrust me out, I pray for grace to learn to be acquainted with misery, if I may give so rough a name to such a mark of those who shall be crowned with Christ. And, howbeit I may possibly prove a faint-hearted, unwise man in that, yet I dare to say that I intend otherwise: and I desire not to go on the lee-side, or sunny-side of religion, to put truth betwixt me and a storm—my Saviour did not so for me, who in his suffering took the windy side of the hill.

No further, but the Son of God be with you.

Your Ladyship's in the Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, Dec. 5, 1634.

LETTER XXXIX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WELL-BELOVED AND DEAR SISTER,—I know that your heart is cast down for the desolation like to come upon this Kirk, and the appearance that a hireling shall be thrust in upon Christ's flock in that town—but send a heavy heart up to Christ; it will be welcome. Those that are with the Beast and the Dragon must make war with the Lamb: but the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they who are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful, (Rev. xvii. 14.) Our ten days shall have an end; all the former things will be forgotten, when we shall be up before the throne. Christ hath been ever thus in the world, he hath always the defender's part,

and hath been still in the camp, fighting the Church's battles. The enemies of the Son of God shall be fed with their own flesh, and shall drink their own blood: and, therefore, their part of it shall at last be found hard enough—so that we may look forward and pity them. Until the number of the elect be fulfilled, Christ's garments must be rolled in blood; he cometh from Edom, from the slaughter of his enemies, (Isa. lxiii. 1,) clothed with dyed garments, glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength. "Who is this, (saith he,) that appeareth in this glorious posture?" Our great He,[1] that He,[1] who is mighty to save; whose glory shineth, while he sprinkleth the blood of his adversaries upon his garments, and staineth all his raiment. The glory of his righteous revenges shineth forth in these stains. But seeing that our world is not hereaway,[2] we poor children, far from home, must steal through many waters, weeping as we go, and withal believing that we do the Lord's faithfulness no wrong, seeing he hath said, (Isaiah li. 12,) "I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou that art afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man who shall be made as grass?" (Isaiah xliii. 2,) "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

There is a cloud gathering, and a storm coming. This Land shall be turned upside down: and, if ever the Lord spake to me—think on it—Christ's bride shall be glad of a hole to hide her head in; and the Dragon may so far prevail as to chase the Woman and her Man-child over sea. But there shall be a gleaning, two or three berries left in the top of the olive tree, of which God will say, "Destroy them not, for there is a blessing in them." Thereafter there shall be a fair sun-blink[3] on Christ's old Spouse, and a clear sky, and she shall sing as in the days of her youth. The Antichrist and the great red Dragon will lop Christ's branches, and bring his vine to a low stump, under the feet of those who carry the mark of the beast; but the Plant of Renown, the Man, whose name is the BRANCH, shall bud forth again and blossom as the rose, and there shall be fair white flourishes[4] again, with most pleasant fruits upon that Tree of Life. A fair season may he have! Grace, grace be upon that blessed and beautiful Tree! under whose shadow we shall sit, and his fruit shall be sweet to our taste. But Christ will woo his handful in the fire, and choose his own in the furnace of affliction. But, be it so, he dow not,[5] he will not slay his children. Love will not let him make a full end. The Covenant will cause him to hold his hand. "Fear not, then," saith the First and the Last, He who was dead, and is alive. We see not Christ sharpening and furbishing his sword for his enemies; and, therefore, our faithless hearts say, as Zion

[1] He is often used in the Scottish dialect, as הוּא is in the Hebrew, as a name of God. [2] In this present life.
[3] Sun-gleam. [4] Blossoms. [5] Is not able.

did, "The Lord hath forsaken me." But God reproveth her, and saith, "Well, well, Zion, is that well said? Think again on it; ye are in the wrong to me." (Isaiah xlix. 15,) "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the fruit of her womb? Yea, she may; yet will I not forget thee. (Ver. 16,) Behold, I have engraven thee upon the palms of my hands." Ye break your heart, and grow heavy, and forget that Christ hath your name engraven on the palms of his hands, in great letters. In the name of the Son of God, believe that buried Scotland, dead and buried in her dear Bridegroom, shall rise the third day again, and there shall be a new growth after the old timber is cut down.

I commend you, and your burdens, and heavy heart, to the supportings of His grace and good-will, who dwelt in the bush, to Him, who was separated from his brethren. Try your husband afar off, to see if he can be induced to think upon going to America.

Oh, to see the sight next to Christ's coming in the clouds, the most joyful! our elder brethren, the Jews, and Christ fall upon one another's necks, and kiss each other! They have been long asunder, they will be kind to one another when they meet: O day! O longed for, and lovely day, dawn! O sweet Jesus, let me see that sight that will be as life from the dead, thee and thy ancient people in mutual embraces!

Desire your daughter to close with Christ, upon terms of suffering for him; for the cross is an old mailing[1] and plot of ground that lieth to Christ's house: our dear Chief had always that rent lying to his inheritance. But tell her, that the day is near the dawning; the sky is riving, our Beloved will be on us ere ever we be aware. The Antichrist, and death and Hell, and Christ's enemies, and ours, shall be bound, and cast into the Bottomless Pit.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, April 22, 1635.

LETTER XL.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Loving and Dear Sister,—For Zion's sake hold not your peace, neither be discouraged for the on-going of this persecution; Jehovah is in this burning bush. The floods may swell and roar, but our ark shall swim above the water: it cannot sink, because a Saviour is in it. Because our Beloved was not let in by his Spouse, when he stood at the door with his wet and frozen head; therefore, he will have us to seek him a while; and, while we are seeking, the watchmen, that go about the walls, have stricken the

[1] Farm.

poor woman, and have taken away her veil from her: but yet a little while, and our Lord will come again; Scotland's sky shall clear again; her moment must go over. I dare, in faith, say, and write—I am not now dreaming—that Christ is but seeking, (what he will have, and make,) a clean, glistering bride out of the fire: God send him his errand; but he cannot want what he seeketh. In the mean time, one way or other, he will find, or make a nest for his mourning dove. What is this that we are doing, breaking the neck of our faith? We are not come, as yet, to the mouth of the Red Sea; and howbeit we were, for his honor's sake he must dry it up. It is our part to die gripping[1] and holding fast his faithful promise. If the Beast should get leave to ride through the land, and to seal such as are his, he will not get one lamb with him; for these are secured, and sealed as the servants of God. In God's name, let Christ take his barn-floor, and all that is in it, to a hill, and winnow it; let him sift his corn, and sweep his house, and seek his gold. The Lord shall cog[2] the rumbling wheels, or turn them; for the remainder of wrath doth he restrain. He can loose the belt of kings; to God, their belt, wherewith they are girt, is knit with a single draw-knot.[3]

As for a pastor to your town, your conscience can bear you witness that ye have done your part. Let the Master of the vineyard now see to his garden, seeing ye have gone on till he hath said "Stand still." The will of the Lord be done. But a trial is not to give up with God, and believe no more.

I thank my God, in Christ, that I find the force of my temptation abated, and its edge blunted, since I spoke to you last. I know not if the tempter be hovering[4] until he find the dam gather again, and me more secure; but it hath been my burden; and I am yet more confident that the Lord will succor and deliver.

I intend, God willing, that our communion shall be celebrated the first sabbath after Pasch;[5] our Lord, that great Master of the feast, send us one hearty and heartsome[6] supper; for I look that it shall be the last. But we expect that when the shadows shall flee away, and the day dawn, and our Lord come to his garden, he will feed us in green pastures without fear;—the dogs then shall not be hounded out amongst the sheep. I earnestly desire your prayers for assistance at our work, and put others with you to do the same.

Remember me to your husband; and desire your daughter to be kind to Christ, and seek to win near him. He will give her a welcome into his house-of-wine, and bring her into the King's

[1] Grasping.

[2] *To cog a wheel.* is to place a stone or a piece of wood wedgewise between it and the ground, to prevent it from moving.

[3] A slip-knot, which can be loosened by simply pulling by one of the ends.

[4] Tarrying.

[5] Easter, the season of the Passover, from פֶּסַח, *Pâsach*, be passed over.

[6] Gladsome.

chambers. Oh how will the sight of his face, and the smell of his garments allure and ravish her heart!

Now the love of the lovely Son of God be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, 1635.

LETTER XLI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered—having appointed a meeting with Mr. David Dickson, and knowing that B. will not keep the presbytery, I cannot see you now. Commend my journey to God. My soul blesseth you for your last letter.

Be not discouraged; Christ will not want the Isles-men; the Isles shall wait for his law: we are his inheritance, and he will sell no part of his inheritance. For the sins of this land, and our breach of the Covenant, contempt of the Gospel, and our defection from the truth, he hath set up a burning furnace in Mount Zion; but I say it, and will abide by it, "The grass shall yet grow green on our Mount Zion. There shall be dew all the night upon the lilies, amongst which Christ feedeth, until the day break and the shadows flee away: and the moth shall eat up the enemies of Christ," (Isa. l. 9.) Let them make a fire of their own, and walk in the light thereof, it shall not let them see to go to their bed; but they shall lye down in sorrow; therefore, rejoice and believe.

This in haste. Grace, grace be with you and yours.

Yours, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

LOVING AND DEAR SISTER,—I fear that ye be moved and cast down because of the late wrong, that your husband received in your town-council. But, I pray you, comfort yourself in the Lord: for a just cause bideth under the water only as long as wicked men hold their hand above it; their arm will weary, and then the just cause shall swim above, and the light that is sown for the righteous shall spring and grow up. If ye were not strangers here, the dogs of the world would not bark at you, (2 Cor. vi. 8.) Ye shall see all the windings and turnings that are in your way to Heaven, out of God's word: for he will not lead you to the Kingdom at the nearest; but you must go through "honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true;

(ver. 9,) as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; (ver. 10,) as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing." The world is one of the enemies that we have to fight with, but a vanquished and overcome enemy, and like a beaten and forlorn soldier; for our Jesus hath taken the armor from it. Let me then speak to you in his words: "Be of good courage," saith the Captain of our salvation, "for I have overcome the world." Ye shall neither be free of the scourge of the tongue, nor of disgraces, even if it were buffeting, and spittings upon the face, as was our Saviour's case, if ye follow Jesus Christ.

I beseech you, in the bowels of our Lord Jesus, to keep a good conscience, as I trust ye do. Ye live not upon men's opinion; gold may be gold, and have the King's stamp upon it, when it is trampled upon by men. Happy are ye if, when the world trampleth upon you in your credit and good name, yet, ye are the Lord's gold, stamped with the King of Heaven's image, and sealed by his Spirit unto the day of your redemption. Pray for the spirit of love. (1 Cor. xiii. 7,) Love "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things."

And I pray you and your husband, yea, I charge you before God, and the Lord, Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, to pray for these your adversaries, and read this to your husband from me; and let both of you put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies. And, sister, remember how many thousands of talents of sins your Master hath forgiven you; forgive ye, therefore, your fellow-servants one talent. Follow God's command in this, and seek not after your own heart, and after your own eyes in this matter, as the Spirit speaketh, (Numb. xv. 39.) Ask never the counsel of your own heart here; the world will blow up your heart now, and cause it to swell, except the grace of God cause it to fall. Jesus, even Jesus, the eternal Wisdom of the Father, give you wisdom. I trust that God shall be glorified in you; and a door shall be opened unto you, as the Lord's prisoners of hope, as Zechariah speaketh. It is a benefit to you that the wicked are God's fan to purge you; and I hope that they will blow away no corn, or spiritual graces, but only your chaff. I pray you, in your pursuit, to have so recourse to the law of men, that ye wander not from the law of God. Be not cast down: if ye saw Him, who is standing on the shore, holding out his arms to welcome you to land, ye would wade, not only through a sea of wrongs, but through Hell itself, to be at him; and I trust in God, that ye see him sometimes.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit, and all yours.

Your Brother, in the Lord, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLIII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WORTHY AND DEAR SISTER,—My dearest love in Christ remembered—as to that business, which I know you would so fain have to take effect, my earnest desire is, that you stand still. Haste not, and you shall see the salvation of God. The great Master-gardener, the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, in a wonderful providence, with his own hand—I dare, if it were to edification, swear it,—planted me here, where, by his grace, in this part of his Vineyard, I grow—I dare not say, but Satan and the world (one of his pages, whom he sendeth his errands,) have said otherwise—and here I will abide, till the great Master of the Vineyard think fit to transplant me. But when he seeth meet to loose me at the root, and to plant me where I may be more useful, both as to fruit and shadow; and when he who planted pulleth up that he may transplant, who dare put-to their hand and hinder? If they do, God will break their arm at the shoulder-blade, and do his turn. When our Lord is going west, the Devil and the world go east: and do you not know, that it hath been ever this way betwixt God and the world, God drawing and they holding; God, "yea," and the world, "nay?"—but they fall on their back and are frustrated, and our Lord holdeth his grip.[1]

Wherefore doth the word say, that our Christ, the Goodman of this house, his dear Kirk, hath feet like fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace? (Rev. i. 15.) For no other cause, but because where our Lord setteth down his brazen feet, he will forward; and whithersoever he looketh, he will follow his look; and his feet burn all under them, like as fire doth stubble and thorns. I think that he hath now given the world a proof of his exceeding great power, when he is doing such great things, wherein Zion is concerned, by the sword of the Swedish king,[2] as of a Gideon.

As you love the glory of God, pray instantly, yea, engage all your praying acquaintance, and take their faithful promise to do the like for this king, and every one that Zion's King armeth to execute the written vengeance on Babylon. Our Lord hath begun to loose some of Babylon's corner stones: pray him to hold on; for that city must fall, and the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth must make a banquet of Babylon: for he hath invited them to eat the flesh of that whore, and to drink her blood; and the cup of the Lord's right-hand shall be turned unto her, and shameful spuing shall be upon her glory. He, whose word must stand, hath said, "Take this cup at the hand of the Lord, and drink, and be drunken, and spue and fall, and rise no more," (Jer. xxv. 27.)

[1] Gripe, [2] Gustavus Adolphus.

Our Jesus is setting up himself as his Father's ensign, (Isa. xi. 10,) as God's fair white colors, that his soldiers may flock about him. Long, long may these colors stand! It is long since, he displayed a banner against Babylon, in the sight of men and angels. Let us rejoice and triumph in our God, the victory is certain: for when Christ and Babel wrestle, then angels and saints may prepare themselves to sing, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!" Howbeit that Prince of renown, precious Jesus, be now weeping and bleeding in his members, yet Christ will laugh again; and it is time enough for us to laugh when our Lord Christ laugheth—and that will be shortly. For when we hear of wars and rumors of wars, the Judge's feet are then before the door, and he must be in Heaven, giving order to the angels to make themselves ready, and prepare their hooks[1] and sickles for that great harvest. Christ will be upon us in haste. Watch but a little, and, ere long, the skies shall rend, and that fair lovely Person, Jesus, will come in the clouds, fraughted[2] and loaded with glory; and then all those knaves and foxes, that destroyed the vines, shall call to the hills, and cry to the mountains to cover them, and hide them from the face of Him, who sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb.

Remember me to your husband: and desire him from me to help Christ, and to take his part, and in judgment to side ever with him, and to receive a blow patiently for his sake; for he is worthy to be suffered for, not only to blows, but also to blood. He will find, that innocency and uprightness in judgment shall hold his feet, and make him happy, when jouking[3] will not do it. I speak this, because a person said to me, "I pray God that the country be not in worse case now, when the provost and baillies[4] are agreed, than formerly:" to whom I replied, I trust the provost is agreed with the man's person, but not with his faults.

I pray for you with my whole soul, and desire that your children may walk in the truth: and that the Lord may shine upon them, and make their faces to shine when the faces of others shall blush. I dare promise them, in His name, whose truth I preach, that if they will but try God's service, they shall find him the sweetest Master that ever they served. Desire them from me but to try for a while the service of this blessed Master, and then if his service be not sweet, if it afford not what is pleasant to the soul's taste, change him, upon trial, and seek a better. Christ is an unknown Christ to young ones, and, therefore, they seek him not, because they know him not. Bid them come and see, and seek a kiss of his mouth; and then they will find his mouth is so sweet, that they will be everlastingly chained unto him, by their

[1] Implements for reaping.

[2] Fraught.

[3] *To jouk* suddenly to incline the body forwards in order to avoid a blow; metaphorically to shift ground in matters of principle in order to avoid some present evil; hence the sarcastic proverbial exhortation addressed to one who acts from expediency, "*Jouk, an' let the jaw gang ower.*"

[4] Magistrates in a Scottish burgh, analogous to the mayor and aldermen in an English one.

own consent. If I have any credit with your children, I entreat them in Christ's name to try what truth and reality is in what I say, and not to leave his service till they have found me a liar.

I give you, your husband, and them, to His keeping, to whom I dare venture and have ventured myself and soul, even to our dear Friend, Jesus Christ, in whom I am,

Yours, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLIV.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WELL-BELOVED SISTER,—My dearest love in Christ remembered to you—know that I am in great heaviness for the pitiful case of our Lord's Kirk. I hear that the cause, why Dr. Burton is committed to prison, is his writing and preaching against the Arminians; I, therefore, entreat the aid of your prayers for myself, and the Lord's captives of hope, and for Zion. The Lord hath let, and daily letteth, me see clearly how deep furrows Arminianism, and the followers of it shall draw upon the back of God's Israel—but our Lord cutteth the cords of the wicked. (Isa. xlix. 14,) "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." (Lam. i. 2,) Zion "weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are upon her cheeks; amongst her lovers she hath none to comfort her, all her friends have dealt treacherously with her, and are become her enemies." (Isa. i. 22,) "Our silver is become dross, our wine is mixed with water." (Lam. iv. 1,) "How is the gold become dim? How is the most fine gold changed? the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street." (Ver. 2,) "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter!" It is time now for the Lord's secret ones, who favor the dust of Zion, to cry, "How long, O Lord?" and to go up to their watch-tower, and to stay there, and not to come down, until the vision speak; for it will speak, (Hab. ii.) In the mean time, the "just shall live by his faith." Let us wait on, and not weary. I have not a thread to hang upon and rest, but this one, (Isa. xlix. 15,) "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, yet will I not forget thee?" (Ver. 16,) "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me:" for all outward helps do fail. It is time, therefore, for us to hang ourselves, as our Lord's vessels; upon the rail that is fastened in a sure place. We would make stakes of our own fastening, but they will break. Our Lord will have Sion on his own nail. Edom is busy within us, and Babel without us, against the handful of Jacob's seed. It

were best that we were upon Christ's side of it, for his enemies will get the stakes to keep, as the proverb is. Our greatest difficulty will be, to win on upon the Rock now, when the wind and waves of persecution are so lofty and proud. Let sweet Jesus take us by the hand; neither must we think that it will be otherwise, for it is told to the souls under the altar, (Rev. vi.,) that their fellow-servants must be killed, as they were. Surely it cannot be long till day. Nay, hear him say, "Behold, I come, my dear Bride; think not long,[1] I shall be at you at once; I hear you, and am coming." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; for the prisoners of hope are looking out at the prison-windows, to see if they can behold the King's Ambassador coming with the King's warrant, and the keys. I write not to you by guess now, because I have a warrant to say unto you that the garments of Christ's Spouse must be once again dyed in blood, as long ago her Husband's was. But our Father seeth his bleeding Son. What I write unto you show to I. G.

Grace, grace, grace and mercy be with you, your husband, and children. Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLV.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved and Dear Sister in Christ,—I could not get an answer written to your letter till now, in respect of my wife's disease, and she is yet mightily pained. I hope that all shall end in God's mercy. I know that an afflicted life looketh very like the way that leadeth to the Kingdom; for the Apostle (Acts xiv. 22,) hath drawn the line, and the King's market-way, through much tribulation, to the Kingdom. The Lord grant us the whole armor of God.

Ye write to me concerning your people's disposition, how their hearts are inclined toward the man ye know, and whom ye desire most earnestly yourself. He would most gladly have the Lord's call for transplantation, for he knoweth that all God's plants, set by his own hand, thrive well; and if the work be of God, he can make a stepping-stone of the Devil himself, for setting forward the work. For yourself, I would advise you to ask of God a submissive heart. Your reward shall be with the Lord. Although the people be not gathered, as the prophet speaketh, and suppose the word do not prosper, God shall account you a repairer of the breaches. And take Christ caution[2] that ye shall not lose your reward. Hold your grip[3] fast. If ye knew the mind of the glorified in Heaven—they think Heaven came to their hand at an easy market, when they have got it for threescore or fourscore years'

[1] Long not. [2] Security. [3] Gripe.

wrestling with God. When ye are come thither, ye shall think that all which I did in respect of my rich reward, now enjoyed of free grace, was too little. Now, then, for the love of the Prince of your salvation, who is standing at the end of your way, holding up in his hand the prize and the garland to the race-runners, forward! forward! faint not! Take as many to Heaven with you, as ye are able to draw; the moe ye draw with you, ye shall be the welcomer yourself. Be no niggard, or sparing churl of the grace of God; and employ all your endeavors for establishing an honest ministry in your town, now when ye have so few to speak a good word for you. I have many a grieved heart daily in my calling: I would be undone, if I had not access to the King's chamber-of-presence, to show him all the business. The Devil rageth, and is mad to see the water drawn from his own mill; but would to God that we could be the Lord's instruments to build the Son of God's house!

Pray for me. If the Lord furnish not new timber from Lebanon, to build the house, the work will cease. I look to Him, who hath begun well with me; I have His hand-writ that He will not change.

Your daughter is well, and longeth for a Bible. The Lord establish you in peace. The Lord Jesus be with your Spirit.

Yours, at all power in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLVI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Mistress,—My love in Christ remembered—our communion is on Sabbath come eight days. I will entreat you to recommend it to God, and to pray for me in that work. I have more sins upon me now than the last time; therefore, I will beseech you, in Christ, seek this petition to me from God, that the Lord would give me grace to vow, and perform new obedience. I have cause to suit[1] this of you, and show it to Thomas Carson, Fergus and Jean Brown, for I have been, and am exceedingly cast down, and am fighting against a malicious Devil, of whom I can win little ground; and I would think a spoil plucked from him and his trusty servant, sin, a lawful and just conquest—and it were no sin to take from him.

In the name of the Goodman of our house, King Jesus, I invite you to the banquet; He saith that ye shall be dearly welcome to Him. And I desire to believe (howbeit not without great fear) that He will be as hearty in His own house as He has been before. For me it is but small reckoning; but I would fain have our Father and Lord to break the great fair Loaf, Christ, and to distrib-

[1] To urge a request.

ute His slain Son amongst the bairns of His house; and that, if any were a step-bairn in respect of comfort and sense, it were rather myself than His poor bairns. Therefore, bid our Well-beloved come to His garden, and feed among the lilies.

And as concerning Zion, I hope that our Lord, who (Zech. ii.,) sent His angel with a measuring-line in his hand, to measure the length and breadth of Jerusalem, in token that He would not want a foot length or inch of His own free heritage, will take order with those who have taken away many acres of His own land from Him; and that God will build Jerusalem in the old sted[1] and place where it was before. In this hope, rejoice, and be glad. Christ's garment was not dipped in blood for nothing, but for His Bride, whom he bought with strokes. I will desire you to remember my old suits to God, God's glory, and increase of light, that I dry not up. For your town, hope and believe that the Lord will gather in His loose sheaves among you to His barn, and send one with a well-toothed, sharp hook,[2] and strong gardies,[3] to reap His harvest. And the Lord Jesus, be Husbandman, and oversee the growing!

Remember my love to your husband, and to Samuel. Grace upon you, and your children. Lord make them corner-stones in Jerusalem, and give them grace in their youth to take band[4] with the fair, chief Corner-stone, who was hewed out of the mountain, without hands, and got many a knock with his Father's fore-hammer,[5] and endured them all, and the Stone did neither cleave nor break.—Upon that Stone your soul doth well to lie.

King Jesus be with your spirit.

Your Friend, in his well-beloved, Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLVII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Much Honored and Dear Mistress,—My love in Christ remembered—I am grieved at the heart to write anything to you, to breed heaviness to you; and what I have written, I wrote it with much heaviness. But I entreat you in Christ's name, when my soul is under wrestlings, and seeking direction from our Lord, (to whom this Vineyard belongeth,) whither I shall go, give me liberty to advise, and try all airts[6] and paths, to see whether He goeth before me and leadeth me; for if I were assured of God's call to your town, let my arm fall from my shoulder-blade and lose power, and my right eye be dried up, which is the judgment of the idol shepherd, (Zech. xi. 17,) if I would not swim through

[1] Site. [2] Sickle. [3] The arms.
[4] *To take band with*, to unite with, as the mortar does to the stones in a building.
[5] Sledge-hammer. [6] Quarters, points of the compass.

the water without a boat, ere I sat his bidding.[1] But, if ye knew my doubtings and fears in that, ye would suffer with me. Whether they be temptations, or impediments cast in by God, I know not. But ye have now cause to thank God; for, seeing the Bishop hath given you such a promise, he will give you an honest man, more willingly than he will permit me to come to you. And, as I ever entreated you, put the business out of your hand into the Lord's reverence; and try of him, if ye have warrant of him, to seek no man in the world, but one only when there are choice of good men to be had—howbeit they be too scarce, yet they are. And what God saith to me in the business, I resolve, by his grace, to do; for I know not what he will do with me, but God will fill you with joy ere the business be ended; for I persuade myself that our Lord Jesus hath stirred you up already to do good in the business, and ye shall not lose your reward.

I have heard that your husband, and Samuel have been sick. The Man who is called the Branch and God's Fellow, and standeth before His Father, will be your stay and help, (Zech. xiii. 7.) I would that I were able to comfort your soul; but have patience and stand, still he that believeth maketh not haste.

This matter of Crammond, cast in at this time, is either a temptation, having fallen out at this time, or then[2] it will clear all my doubts, and let you see the Lord's will. But I never knew my own part in the business till now; I thought I was more willing to have embraced the charge in your town than I am, or am able to win to.[3] I know that ye pray that God would resolve me what to do; and will interpret me as love biddeth you, which thinketh not ill, and believeth all things, and hopeth all things. Would ye have more than the Son of God? and ye have Him already, and ye shall be fed by the carver of the meat, be that who he will; and those who are hungry, look more to the meat than to the carver.

I cannot see you the next week. If my Lady come home, I must visit her. The week thereafter there will be a presbytery at Girthon; God will dispose of the meeting.

Grace upon you, and your seed, and husband. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLVIII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WORTHY AND WELL-BELOVED MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered—I have sent you a letter from Mr. David Dickson,

[1] *To sit one's bidding*, not promptly to do what has been commanded.
[2] Otherwise. [3] Attain to.

concerning the placing of Mr. Hugh MacKail with themselves; therefore, I write to you now only to entreat you in Christ not to be discouraged thereat. Be submissive to the will of your dear Lord, who knoweth best what is good for your soul and your town both: for God can come over greater mountains than these, we believe; for he worketh his greatest works contrary to carnal reason and means. "My ways are not," saith our Lord, "as your ways; neither are my thoughts as your thoughts." (Isaiah lv.) I am no whit put from my belief for all that:—believe, pray, and use means.

We shall cause Mr. John Ker, who convoyed myself to Lochinvar, to use means to seek a man, if Mr. Hugh fail us. Our Lord hath a little bride among you, and I trust he will send one to woo her to our sweet Lord Jesus. He will not want his wife for the suiting;[1] and he hath means in abundance in his hand to open all the slots[2] and bars that Satan draweth over the door. He cometh to his bride leaping over the mountains, and skipping over the hills. His way to his spouse is full of stones, mountains, and waters; yet he putteth in his foot, and wadeth through; he will not want her; and, therefore, refresh me with two words, concerning your confidence and courage in our Lord, both about that, and about his own Zion; for he wooeth his wife in the burning bush: and for the good-will of Him that dwelleth in the bush, the bush is not consumed. It is better to weep with Jerusalem in the forenoon, than to weep with Babel after noon, in the end of the day. Our day of laughter and rejoicing is coming; yet a little while, and ye shall see the salvation of God.

I long to see you and to hear how your children are, especially Samuel. Grace be their heritage, and portion from the Lord; and the Lord be their lot, and then their inheritance shall please them well.

Remember my love to your husband.—The Lord Jesus be with your spirit. Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER XLIX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved Sister,—My love in Jesus Christ remembered —your daughter is well, thanks be to God; I trust in him that ye shall have joy of her. The Lord bless her. I am now presently going about catechizing.

The bearer is in haste. Forget not poor Zion, and the Lord remember you, for we shall be shortly winnowed. Jesus, pray for

[1] Courting.

[2] A *slot* is a strong movable bolt or bar, which is drawn out of a socket on the side of a door till the end enters into a socket on the other side of the door, and thus the door is secured by each end of the slot resting in a socket in the wall. In this manner were the gates of the ancient Scottish keeps and strong-holds secured.

us, that our faith fail not. I would wish to see you a Sabbath with us, and we shall stir up one another, God willing, to seek the Lord; for it may be that he hide himself from us ere it be long. Keep that which you have, ye will get more in Heaven. The Lord send us to the shore out of all the storms, with our silly souls whole and sound with us; for if liberty of conscience come, as is rumored, the best of us all will be put to our wits to seek how to be freed. But we shall be with those who have their chamber to go in unto, spoken of, (Isa. xxvi. 20.) Read the place yourself, and keep you within your house whill the storm be past. If you can learn a dittay[1] against C., try, and cause to try, that we may see the Lord's righteous judgment upon the Devil's instruments. We are not much obliged to his kindness; I wish that all such wicked doers were cut off.

These in haste; I bless you in God's name, and all yours. Your daughter desireth a Bible and a gown. I hope that she will use the Bible well, which, if she do, the gown is the better bestowed.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, forever, in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER L.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Mistress,—My love in Jesus Christ remembered—I am in good health, honor to my Lord; but my wife's disease increaseth daily, to her great torment and pain night and day. She hath not been in God's house since our communion, neither out of her bed. I have hired a man to Edinburgh, to Dr. Jeally, and to John Hamilton: I can hardly believe her disease is ordinary, for her life is bitter to her. She sleepeth none, but crieth, as a woman travailing in birth; what will be the event He that hath the keys of the grave knoweth. I have been many times since I saw you, that I have besought the Lord to loose her out of the body, and to take her to her rest. I believe that the Lord's tide of afflictions will ebb again; but at present I am exercised with the wrestlings of God, being afraid of nothing more than this, that God hath let loose the Tempter upon my house. God rebuke him and his instrument. Because Satan is not cast out but by fasting and prayer, I entreat you to remember our estate to our Lord, and entreat all good Christians, whom ye know, but especially your Pastor, to do the same. It becometh us still to knock, and to lie at the Lord's door, whill we die knocking. If he will not open, it is more than he hath said in his word; but he is faithful. I look not to win away to my home without wounds, and blood. Welcome, wel-

[1] Ground of indictment.

come cross of Christ, if Christ be with it! I have not a calm spirit in the work of my calling here, being daily chastised; yet God hath not put out my candle, as he doth to the wicked.

Grace, grace be with you and all yours.

Yours, in his Lord, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER LI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WORTHY AND WELL-BELOVED MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered—I know that ye have heard of the purpose of my adversaries, to try what they can do against me at this synod, for the work of God in your town, when I was at your communion. They intend to call me in question at the synod, for treasonable doctrine; therefore, help me with your prayers, and desire your acquaintance to help me also. Your ears heard how Christ was there. If he suffer his servant to get a broken head, in his own kingly service, and not either help or revenge the wrong, I never saw the like of it. There is not a night-drunkard, time-serving, idle idol-shepherd to be spoken against—I am the only man: and because it is so, and I know that God will not help them, lest they be proud, I am confident that their process shall fall asunder. Only be ye earnest with God for hearing, for an open ear, and reading of the bill, that he may in Heaven hear both parties, and judge accordingly: and doubt not, fear not, that they shall not, who now ride highest, put Christ out of his kingly possession in Scotland. The pride of man, and his rage, shall turn to the praise of our Lord. It is an old feud, that the rulers of the earth, the Dragon and his angels, have carried to the Lamb and his followers; but the followers of the Lamb shall overcome by the word of God: and believe this, and wait on a little, till they have got their womb-ful[1] of clay and gravel, and they shall know, (howbeit stolen waters be sweet,) that Esau's portion is not worth his hunting.

Commend me to your husband, and send me word how Grizzel is. The Son of God lead her through the water.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER LII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

MISTRESS,—My love in Christ remembered—at the desire of

[1] Belly-full.

this bearer, whom I love, I thought to request you, if ye can help his wife with your advice, for she is in a most dangerous and deadly-like condition; for I have thought that she was far changed in her carriage and life this sometime by-passed, and had hoped that God would have brought her home; and now, by appearance, she will depart this life, and leave a number of children behind her. If ye can be entreated to help her, it is a work of mercy. My own wife is in exceeding great torment, night and day. Pray for us, for my life was never so wearisome to me. God hath filled me with gall and wormwood; but I believe, which holdeth my head above the water. "It is good for a man," saith the Spirit of God, (Lam. iii.,) "that he bear the yoke in his youth."

I do remember you. I pray you be humble and believe; and I entreat you in Jesus Christ, pray for John Stuart and his wife, and desire your husband to do the same. Remember me heartily to Jean Brown. Desire her to pray for me and my wife: I do remember her. Forget not Zion! Grace, grace and peace, upon them that pray for Zion! She is the ship we sail in to Canaan; if she broken on a rock, we shall be cast overboard, to swim to land betwixt death and life.

The grace of Jesus be with your husband, and children.

Yours, in our Christ, S. R.

Anwoth.

LETTER LIII.

TO EARLSTON, ELDER.

Much Honored Sir,—I have heard of the mind and malice of your adversaries against you. It is like that they will extend the law which they have, in length and breadth, answerable to their heat of mind; but it is a great part of your glory, that the cause is not yours, but your Lord's whom ye serve; and I doubt not but Christ will count it his honor to back his weak servant,—and it were a shame for him, with reverence to his holy name, that he should suffer himself to be in the common of[1] such a poor man as ye are, and that ye should give out for him, and not get in again. Write up your depursements[2] for your Master, Christ, and keep count of what ye give out, whether name, credit, goods, or life, and suspend your reckoning till nigh the evening; and remember that a poor weak servant of Christ wrote it to you, that ye shall have Christ, a King, caution[3] for your incomes and all your losses. Reckon not from the forenoon. Take the word of God for your warrant, and for Christ's act of cautionry,[4] howbeit body, life and goods go for Christ your Lord, and though ye should lose the head for him; yet, (Luke xxi. 18,) there shall not one hair of

[1] Under obligation to.
[2] Disbursements.
[3] Security.
[4] Suretyship.

your head perish, (ver. 19,) in patience, therefore, possess your soul. And because ye are the first man in Galloway called out and questioned for the name of Jesus, his eye hath been upon you, as upon one whom he designed to be among his witnesses. Christ hath said, "Alexander Gordon shall lead the ring, in witnessing a good confession;" and, therefore, he hath put the garland of suffering for himself, first upon your head. Think yourself so much the more obliged to him, and fear not; for he layeth his right hand on your head. He who was dead and is alive, will plead your cause, and will look attentively upon the process from the beginning to the end; and the spirit of glory shall rest upon you, (Rev. ii. 10.) "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried, and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life." That lovely One, Jesus, who also became the Son of man, that he might take strokes for you, write the cross-sweetening and soul-supporting sense of these words in your heart.

These rumbling wheels of Scotland's ten-days' tribulation are under His look, who hath seven eyes. Take a house on your head, and slip yourself by faith under Christ's wings, till the storm be over. And remember that when they have drunk us down, Jerusalem will be a cup of trembling and of poison, (Zech. xii. 2.) They shall be fain to vomit out the saints; for Judah, (ver. 6,) shall be an hearth of fire in a sheaf, and they shall devour all the people round about, on the right hand and on the left. Wo to the enemies of Zion. They have the worst of it: for we have writ[1] for the victory.

Sir, ye were never so honorable as ye are now. This is your glory, that Christ hath put you into the roll with himself, and the rest of the witnesses, who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Be not cast down for what the servants of Antichrist cast in your teeth, that ye are a head to, and favorer of the Puritans, and leader to that sect. If your conscience say, "Alas, here is much din and little done," (as the proverb is,) because ye have not done so much service to Christ that way as ye might and should, take courage from that same temptation; for your Lord, Christ, looketh upon that very challenge,[2] as a hungering desire in you to have done more than ye did; and that filleth up the blank, and he will accept of what ye have done in that kind. If great men be kind to you, I pray you to overlook[3] them: if they smile on you, Christ but borroweth their face, to smile through them upon his afflicted servant. Know the well-head; and for all that, learn the way to the well itself.

Thank God that Christ came to your house in your absence, and took with him some of your children. He presumed that much on your love, that ye would not be offended; and howbeit

[1] Writing under the hand. [2] Accusation. [3] Look over.

he should take the rest, he cannot come upon your wrong side. I question not, if they were children of gold, but ye would think them well bestowed upon him.

Expound well these two rods on you, one on your house at home, another on your own person abroad. Love thinketh no evil; if ye were not Christ's wheat, appointed to be bread in his house, he would not grind you. But keep the middle line, neither despise nor faint, (Heb. xii. 6.) Ye see that your Father is homely[1] with you. Strokes of a father evidence kindness and care—take them so. I hope that your Lord hath manifested himself to you, and suggested these or more choice thoughts about his dealing with you. We are using our weak moyen[2] and credit for you up at our own court, as we dow;[3] we pray the King to hear us, and the Son of Man to go side for side with you, and hand in hand, in the fiery oven, and to quicken and encourage your unbelieving heart, when ye droop and despond.

Sir, to the honor of Christ be it said, that my faith goeth with my pen now. I am presently believing that Christ will bring you out. Truth in Scotland shall keep the crown of the causeway[4] yet. The saints shall see religion go naked at noon-day, free from shame and fear of men. We shall divide Shechem, and ride upon the high places of Jacob.

Remember my obliged respects and love to my Lady Kenmure and her sweet child.

Yours ever, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, July 6, 1636.

LETTER LIV.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved Mistress,—I charge you, in the name of the Son of God, to rest upon your Rock, that is higher than yourself; be not afraid of a man who is a worm, nor for the son of man who shall die; let God be your fear. Encourage your husband. I would counsel you to write to Edinburgh to some advised lawyers, to understand what your husband, as the head-magistrate, may do, in opposing any intruded minister, and as to his carriage toward the new Prelate, if he command him to imprison or lay hands upon any, and, in a word, how far he may in his office disobey a prelate, without danger of law: for if the Bishop come to your town, and find not obedience to his heart, it is like that he will command the provost to assist him against God and the truth—ye will have more courage under the persecution. Fear not; take Christ caution,[5] who said, (Luke xxi. 18,) "There

[1] Familiar. [2] Interest. [3] Are able.
[4] *To keep the crown of the causeway*, to appear in public without either shame or fear.
[5] Security.

shall not one hair of your head perish." Christ will not be in your common,[1] to have you giving out anything for him, and not give you all incomes, with advantage. It is his honor that his servants should not be herried[2] and undone in his service. Ye were never honored till now. And if your husband be the first magistrate who shall suffer for Christ's name in this persecution, he may rejoice that Christ hath put the first garland upon his head, and upon yours. Truth will yet keep the crown of the causeway in Scotland. Christ and truth are strong enough. They judge us now; we shall one day judge them, and sit on twelve thrones, and judge the Twelve Tribes. Believe, believe; for they dare not pray, they dare not look Christ in the face. They have been false to Christ, and he will not sit with[3] the wrong. Ye know, that it is not our cause; for if we would quit our Lord, we might sleep, for the present, in a sound skin, and keep our place, means and honor, and be dear to them also. But let us once put all we have over into Christ's hands.

Fear not for my papers, I shall dispatch them; but ye will be examined for them. The Spirit of Jesus give you inward peace. Desire your husband, from me, to prove honest to Christ; he shall not be a loser at Christ's hand.

Yours, ever, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, July 8, 1635.

LETTER LV.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I cannot find a time for writing some things which I intended on Job, I have been so taken up with the broils that we are encumbered with in our calling: for our Prelate will have us either to swallow our light over, and digest it, contrary to our stomachs, howbeit we should vomit our conscience and all, in this troublesome Conformity; or then[4] he will try if deprivation can convert us to the ceremonial faith.

I write to your Ladyship, madam, not as distrusting your affection, or willingness to help me, as your Ladyship is able by yourself, or others, but to advertise you, that I hang by a small thread. For our learned Prelate, because we cannot see with his eyes so far into a millstone as his light doth, will not follow his Master, meek Jesus, who waited upon the wearied and short-breathed in the way to Heaven,—and where all see not alike, and some are weaker, he carrieth the lambs in his bosom, and leadeth gently those that are with young,—but we must either see all the evil of ceremonies to be but as indifferent straws, or suffer no less than to be casten out of the Lord's inheritance.

[1] Under obligation to you. [2] Pillaged, ruined by extortion or severe exactions.
[3] *To sit with*, to bear with in silence. [4] Otherwise.

Madam, if I had time I would write more at length; but your Ladyship will pardon me, till a fitter occasion. Grace be with you, and your child, and bear you company to your best home.

Your Ladyship's, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, Jan. 8, 1636.

LETTER LVI.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—I received your Ladyship's letter from J. Gordon. I thank our Lord, that ye are as well, at least, as one may be, who is not come home. It is a mercy, in this stormy sea, to get a second wind; for none of the saints get a first, but they must take the winds as the Lord of the seas causeth them to blow; and the inn, as the Lord and Master of the inns hath ordered it. If contentment were here, Heaven were not heaven. Whoever seek the world to be their bed, shall at best find it short and ill made, and a stone under their side to hold them waking, rather than a soft pillow to sleep upon. Ye ought to bless your Lord that it is not worse: we live in a sea where many have suffered shipwreck, and have need that Christ sit at the helm of the ship. It is a mercy to win to Heaven, though with much hard toil and heavy labor and to take it by violence, ill and well as it may be. Better go swimming and wet through our waters, than drown by the way; especially now when truth suffereth, and great men bid Christ sit lower, and contract himself into less bounds, as if he took too much room.

I expect that our new Prelate will try my sitting. I hang by a thread, but it is (if I may speak so) of Christ's spinning. There is no quarrel more honest or honorable than to suffer for truth; but the worst is, that this Kirk is like to sink, and all her lovers and friends stand afar off; none mourn with her, and none mourn for her. But the Lord Jesus will not be put out of his conquest[1] so soon in Scotland. It will be seen, that the Kirk and truth shall rise again within three days, and Christ again will ride upon his white horse—howbeit his horse seem now to stumble, yet he cannot fall. The fulness of Christ's harvest in the end of the earth is not yet come in. I speak not this, because I would have it so, but upon better grounds than my naked liking. But enough of this sad subject.

I long to be fully assured of your Ladyship's welfare, and that your soul prospereth, especially now in your solitary life, when your comforts outward are few, and when Christ hath you for the very uptaking. I know that his love to you is still running over; and his love hath not so bad a memory as to forget you and your dear child, who hath two fathers in Heaven, the one the Ancient

[1] Acquisition by inheritance or purchase.

of days. I trust in his mercy, that he hath something laid up for him above, however it may go with him here. I know that it is long since your Ladyship saw that this world had turned your step-mother, and had forsaken you. Madam, ye have reason to take in good part a lean dinner and spare diet in this life, seeing your large supper of the Lamb's preparing will recompense all. Let it go which was never yours, but only in sight, not in property: the time of your loan will wear shorter and shorter, and time is measured to you by ounce-weights: and then I know that your hope shall be a full ear of corn, and not blasted with wind. It may be your joy, that your anchor is up within the veil, and that the ground it is cast upon is not false, but firm. God hath done his part: and I hope that ye will not deny to fish and fetch home all your love to himself; and it is but too narrow and short for him, if it were more. If ye were before pouring all your love (if it had been many gallons more) in upon your Lord, if drops fell by[1] in the in-pouring, he forgiveth you; he hath done now all that can be done, to win beyond it all, and hath left little to woo your love from himself, except one only child. What is his purpose herein, He knoweth best, who hath taken your soul in tutoring. Your faith may be boldly charitable of Christ, that, however matters go, the worst shall be a tired traveller, and a joyful and a sweet welcome-home. The back of your winter night is broken.[2] Look to the east, the day sky is breaking; think not that Christ loseth time, or lingereth unsuitably. O fair, fair and sweet morning! We are but as sea-passengers; if we look right we are upon our country coast. Our Redeemer is fast coming, to take this old worm-eaten world, like an old moth-eaten garment, in his two hands, and to roll it up, and lay it by[3] him. These are the last days, and an oath is given, (Rev. x. 6,) by God himself, that time shall be no more: and when time itself is old and gray-haired, it were good we were away.

Thus, madam, ye see I am, as my custom is, tedious in my lines. Your Ladyship will pardon it.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, January 18, 1636.

LETTER LVII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved Sister,—My love in Christ remembered—I hear of good news anent our Kirk, but I fear that our King will not be resisted, and, therefore, let us not be secure and careless. I do wonder if this Kirk come not through our Lord's fan, since there is so much chaff in it howbeit; I persuade myself that the

[1] Past. [2] That is, more than half spent. [3] Past, beside.

Son of God's wheat shall not be blown away. Let us be putting on God's armor, and be strong in the Lord. If the Devil, and Zion's enemies, strike a hole in that armor, let our Lord see to that; let us put it on, and stand; we have Jesus on our side, and they are not worthy of such a Captain, who would not take a blow at his back. We are in sight of his colors; his banner over us is love: look up to that white banner, and stand: I persuade you, in the Lord, of victory.

My brother writeth to me of your heaviness, and of temptations that press you sore. I am content it be so. You bear about with you the marks of the Lord Jesus: so was it with our Lord's Apostle, when he was to come, with the Gospel, to Macedonia, (2 Cor. vii. 5,) his flesh had no rest, he was troubled on every side, and knew not what side to turn him unto; without were fightings, and within were fears. In the great work of our redemption, your lovely, beautiful, and glorious Friend and Well-beloved, Jesus, was brought to tears and strong cries, so as his face was wet with tears and blood, arising from a holy fear, and the weight of the curse. Take a drink of the Son of God's cup, and love it the better that he drank of it before you—there is no poison in it. I wonder many times that ever a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what their Lord is preparing for them.

Is your mind troubled anent that business, which we have in hand in Edinburgh? I trust in my Lord, that the Lord will in the end give to you your heart's desire, even, howbeit, the business frame not. The Lord will feed your soul, and all the hungry souls in that town; therefore, I request you in the Lord to pray for a submissive will; and pray, as your Lord Jesus biddeth you, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven!" And, let it be that your faith be brangled[1] with temptations: believe ye that there is a tree in our Lord's garden that is not often shaken with the wind from all the four airts?[2]—surely there is none. Rebuke your soul, as the Lord's prophet doth, (Psalm xlii.,) "Why art thou cast down, O my soul! why art thou disquieted within me?" That was the word of a man, who was at the very overgoing of the brae[3] and mountain; but God held a grip[4] of him. Swim through your temptations and troubles, to be at that lovely amiable Person, Jesus, to whom your soul is dear. In your temptations, run to the promises; they be our Lord's branches hanging over the water, that our Lord's silly[5] half-drowned children may take a grip of them; if you let that grip go, you will go to the ground.[6]

Are ye troubled with the case of God's Kirk? Our Lord will evermore have her betwixt the sinking and the swimming: he will have her going through a thousand deaths, and through hell, as a cripple[7] woman, halting, and wanting the power of her own side, (Micah iv. 6, 7,) that God may be her staff. That broken ship will come to land, because Jesus is the pilot. Faint not, you

[1] Shaken, thrown into disorder. [2] Quarters. [3] Precipice.
[4] Gripe, grasp. [5] Poor, in the sense of exciting compassion.
[6] Bottom. [7] Lame.

shall see the salvation of God; else say that God never spake His word by my mouth, and I had rather never have been born, ere it were so with me—but my Lord hath sealed me.

I dare not deny, that I have, also, been in heaviness since I came from you, fearing, for my unthankfulness, that I am deserted; but the Lord will be kind to me, whether I will or not. I repose that[1] much in his grace that he will be loath to change upon me. As you love me, pray for me in this particular.

After advising with Carlton, I have written to Mr. David Dickson, anent Mr. Hugh Mackail, and desired him to write his mind to Carlton, and Carlton to Edinburgh, that they may particularly remember Mr. Hugh to the Lord; and I happened upon a convenient trusty bearer, by God's wonderful providence.

No further. I recommend you to the Lord's grace, and your husband and children.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

Edinburgh.

A POSTSCRIPT.

Mistress,—I had not time to give my advice to your daughter Grizzel; you shall carry my words, therefore, to her. Show her now, that, in respect of her tender age, she is, in a manner, as clean paper, ready to receive either good or ill; and that it were a sweet and glorious thing for her to give herself up to Christ, that He may write upon her His Father's name, and His own new name. And desire her to acquaint herself with the Book of God; the promises that our Lord writeth upon His own, and performeth in them, and for them, are contained there. I persuade you, that, when she is in the company of such parents, and hath occasion to learn Christ, I think Christ is wooing her soul; and I pray God that she may not refuse such a Husband. And, therefore, I charge her, and beseech her, by the mercies of God, by the wounds and blood of Him who died for her, by the word of truth, which she heareth and can read, by the coming of the Son of God to judge the world, that she would fulfil your joy, and learn Christ, and walk in Christ. She will think this the truth of God many years after this; and I shall promise to myself in respect of the beginnings that I have seen, that she will give herself to Him who gave Himself for her. Let her begin at prayer; for if she remember her Creator in the days of her youth, He will claim kindness to her in her old age. It shall be a part of my prayers, that this may be effectuated in her, by Him, who is able to do exceedingly abundantly; to whose grace I again recommend you, and her, and all yours.

[1] So.

LETTER LVIII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Well-beloved Sister,—I know that ye have heard of the success of our business in Edinburgh. I do every presbytery-day see the faces of my brethren smiling upon me, but their tongues convey reproaches and lies of me a hundred miles off, and have made me odious to the Bishop of St. Andrew's, who said to Mr. William Dalgleish, that ministers in Galloway were his informers; whereupon no letters of favor could be procured from him for effectuating of our business: only I am brought into the mouths of men, who, otherwise, knew me not, and have power (if God will permit) to harm me; yet I entreat you in the bowels of Christ Jesus, be not cast down. I fear that your sorrow exceed because of this; and I am not so careful of myself in the matter as for you. Take courage; your dearest Lord will light your candle, which the wicked would fain blow out; and as sure as our Lord liveth your soul shall find joy and comfort in this business; howbeit ye see all the hounds in Hell let loose to mar it. Their iron chains to our dear and mighty Lord are but straws, which he can easily break. Let not this temptation stick in your throat; swallow it, and let it go down—our Lord give you a drink of the consolations of His Spirit, that it may digest. Ye never knew one in God's Book who put their hand to the Lord's work for his Kirk, but the world, and Satan, did bark against them, and bite also, where they had power. Ye will not lay one stone on Zion's wall but they will labor to cast it down again.

And for myself, the Lord letteth me see now greater evidences of a calling to Kirkcudbright than ever he did before; and, therefore, pray, and possess your soul in patience. Those that were doers in the business have good hopes that it will yet go forward, and prosper.

As for the death of the King of Sweden, (which is thought to be too true,) we can do nothing else but reverence our Lord, who doth not ordinarily hold Zion on her rock by the sword and arm of flesh and blood, but by his own might and out-stretched arm. Her King, that reigneth in Zion, yet liveth, and they are plucking him round about to pull him off his throne; but his Father hath crowned him, and who dare say "It is ill done?" The Lord's Bride will be up and down, above the water swimming, and under the water sinking, until her lovely and mighty Redeemer and Husband set his head through these skies, and come, with his fair court, to red all their pleas,[1] and give them the hoped-for inheritance—and then, we shall lay down our swords, and triumph, and fight no more. But do not think, for all this, that our Lord and chief Shepherd will want one weak sheep, or the silliest dying

[1] Settle all their disputes.

lamb he hath redeemed. He will tell his flock, and gather them all together, and make a faithful account of them to his Father, who gave them to him. Let us now learn to turn our eyes off men, that our whorish hearts dote not on them, and woo our old Husband and make him our darling; for (Jer. xxv. 27,) thus saith the Lord to the enemies of Zion, "Drink ye and be drunk, and spue, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword that I send amongst you." (Ver. 28,) "And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup at thy hand to drink, then shalt thou say to them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Ye shall certainly drink."

You see our Lord brewing a cup of poison for his enemies, which they must drink, and because of this have sore bowels and sick stomachs, yea, burst. But, (Jer. l. 4,) when Zion's captivity is at an end, "the Children of Israel shall come, they and the Children of Judah, together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God." (Ver. 5,) "They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten." This is spoken to us, and for us, who, with wo[1] hearts, ask, "What is the way to Zion?" It is our part, who know how to go to our Lord's door, and to knock by prayer, and how to lift Christ's slot,[2] and shute[3] the bar of his chamber door, to complain, and tell him how the world handleth us, and how our King's business goeth, that he may get up and lend[4] them a blow, who are tigging[5] and playing with Christ, and his spouse.

Ye have also, dear mistress, house troubles, in sickness of your husband and bairns, and in spoiling of your house by thieves. Take these rods in patience, from your Lord: he must still move you from vessel to vessel, and grind you as our Lord's wheat, to be bread in his house; but when all these strokes are over your head,[6] what will you say to see your well-beloved Christ's white and ruddy face, even His face, who is worthy to bear the colors amongst ten thousand, (Cant. v.) Hope and believe to the end.

Grace, for evermore, be multiplied upon you, your husband, and children.

Your own, in his dearest Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh.

LETTER LIX.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

My Dear, and Well-beloved in Christ,—I am yet under trial, and have appeared before Christ's forbidden Lords[7] for a testimony against them. The Chancellor and the rest tempted me

[1] Grieved.
[2] A strong bar, running from side to side of a door, and having the ends entering into sockets in the wall. [3] Push aside. [4] Give.
[5] Toying. [6] Passed and gone. [7] The prelates, 1 Pet. v. 3.

with questions nothing belonging to my summons, which I wholly declined, notwithstanding his threats. My newly-printed book against the Arminians was one challenge,[1] not lording[2] the prelates another: the most part of the bishops, when I came in, looked more astonished than I, and heard me with silence. Some spoke for me; but my Lord ruled it so, as I am filled with joy in my sufferings, and I find Christ's cross sweet. What they intend the next day, I know not. Be not secure, but pray. Our Bishop of Galloway said, if the Commission would not give him his will of me, with an oath, he said, that he would write to the King. The Chancellor summoned me in judgment, to appear that day eight days. My Lord has brought me a friend from the Highlands of Argyll, my Lord of Lorn,[3] who hath done as much as was within the compass of his power. God gave me favor in his eyes. Mr. Robert Glendonning is silenced, till he accept a colleague. We hope to deal yet for him. Christ is worthy to be intrusted. Your husband will get an easy and good way of his business. Ye and I both shall see the salvation of God upon Joseph, separated from his brethren.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in Christ, S. R.

Edinburgh.

LETTER LX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

HONORED, AND DEAREST IN THE LORD,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you.—I am well, and my soul prospereth. I find Christ with me. I burden no man: I want nothing: no face looketh on me but it laugheth on me. Sweet, sweet is the Lord's cross. I overcome my heaviness. My Bridegroom's love-blinks[4] fatten my weary soul. I go to my King's palace at Aberdeen. Tongue, and pen, and wit cannot express my joy.

Remember my love to Jean Gordon, to my sister, Jean Brown, to Grizzel, to your husband.

Thus in haste. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh, April 5, 1636.

A POSTSCRIPT.

My charge is to you to believe, rejoice, sing and triumph. Christ has said to me, "Mercy, mercy, grace and peace, for Marion Macknaught."

[1] Accusation. [2] Giving the title "lord."
[3] Archibald Campbell, afterwards Marquis of Argyll, and martyr for the Word of God, and Scotland's covenanted Work of Reformation. [4] Love-glances.

LETTER LXI.

TO THE TRULY NOBLE, AND ELECT LADY, MY LADY VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

NOBLE, AND ELECT LADY,—That honor that I have prayed for these sixteen years, with submission to my Lord's will, my kind Lord hath now bestowed upon me; even to suffer for my royal and princely King, Jesus, and for his Kingly crown, and the freedom of his Kingdom, that his Father hath given him. The forbidden lords[1] have sentenced me with deprivation and confinement within the town of Aberdeen. I am charged in the King's name, to enter against the twentieth day of August next, and there to remain during the King's pleasure, as they have given it out. Howbeit Christ's green cross, newly laid upon me, be somewhat heavy, while I call to mind the many fair days, sweet and comfortable to my soul, and to the souls of many others, and how young ones in Christ are plucked from the breast, and the inheritance of God laid waste; yet that sweet-smelled and perfumed cross of Christ is accompanied with sweet refreshment, with the kisses of a King, with the joy of the Holy Ghost, with faith that the Lord heareth the sighing of a prisoner, with undoubted hope, (as sure as my Lord liveth,) after this night to see day-light, and Christ's sky to clear up again upon me, and his poor Kirk, and that in a strange land, amongst strange faces. He will give favor in the eyes of men to his poor oppressed servant, who dow not[2] but love that lovely One, that princely One, Jesus, the Comforter of his soul. All would be well, if I were free of old challenges[3] for guiltiness, and for neglect in my calling, and for speaking too little for my Well-beloved's crown, honor, and Kingdom. Oh, for a day in the assembly of the saints to advocate for King Jesus! If my Lord go on now to quarrels, also, I die. I cannot endure it: but I look for peace from him: because he knoweth I dow[4] bear men's feud, but I dow not[2] bear his feud. This is my only exercise, that I fear I have done little good in my ministry; but I dare not but say, I loved the bairns of the wedding chamber, and prayed for, and desired the thriving of the marriage, and coming of his kingdom.

I apprehend no less than a judgment upon Galloway; and that the Lord will visit this whole nation, for the quarrel of the Covenant. But what can be laid upon me, or any the like of me, is too light for Christ; Christ dow[5] bear more, and would bear death and burning quick, in his weak servants, even for this honorable cause, that I now suffer for. Yet, for all my complaints, (and he knoweth that I dare not now dissemble,) he was never sweeter and kinder than he is now; one kiss now is sweeter than ten long

[1] The prelates, 1 Pet. v. 3. [2] Is not able to. [3] Self-accusations.
[4] Am able to. [5] Is able to.

since; sweet, sweet is his cross; light, light and easy is his yoke. Oh, what a sweet step were it up to my Father's house, through ten deaths, for the truth and cause of that unknown, and so not half well-loved, Plant of Renown, the Man called the Branch, the Chief among ten thousand, the Fairest among the sons of men! Oh what unseen joys, how many hidden heart-burnings of love are in the remnants of the sufferings of Christ! My dear, worthy Lady, I give it to your Ladyship, under my own hand, (my heart-writing as well as my hand,) welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet, and glorious cross of Christ: welcome, sweet Jesus, with thy light cross; thou hast now gained and gotten all my love from me; keep what thou hast gotten. Only, wo, wo is me, for my bereaved flock, for the lambs of Jesus, which I fear shall be fed with dry breasts; but I spare now, madam, I dare not promise to see your Ladyship, because of the little time I have allotted me, and I purpose to obey the King, who hath power over my body; and rebellion to kings is unbeseeming Christ's ministers.

Be pleased to acquaint my Lady Mar with my case: I will look that your Ladyship, and that good lady be mindful to God of the Lord's prisoner, not for my cause, but for the Gospel's sake. Madam, bind me more, (if more can be,) to your Ladyship, and write thanks to your brother, my Lord of Lorn,[1] for what he hath done for me, a poor unknown stranger to his Lordship. I shall pray for him and his house while I live. It is his honor to open his mouth in the streets for his wronged and oppressed Master, Christ Jesus.

Now, madam, commending your Ladyship, and the sweet child, to the tender mercies of mine own Lord Jesus, and the good-will of Him, who dwelt in the bush; I rest,

Yours, in his own sweetest Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh, July 28, 1636.

LETTER LXII.

TO THE LADY CULROSS.

MADAM,—Your letter came in due time to me, now a prisoner of Christ, and in bonds for the Gospel.

I am sentenced with deprivation and confinement within the town of Aberdeen—but oh, my guiltiness, the follies of my youth, the neglects in my calling, and especially in not speaking more for the Kingdom, crown, and sceptre of my royal and princely King, Jesus, do so stare me in the face, that I apprehend danger in that which is a crown of rejoicing to the dear saints of God! This, before my compearance,[2] (which was three several days,) did trouble me, and burdeneth me more now; howbeit Christ, and, in

[1] Archibald Campbell, afterwards Marquis of Argyll.
[2] Appearance in obedience to legal citation.

him, God, reconciled, met me with open arms, and trysted[1] me, precisely at the entry of the door of the Chancellor's hall, and assisted me to answer so as the advantage that is, is not theirs, but Christ's. Alas! it is no cause of wondering, that I am thus borne down with challenges;[2] for the world hath mistaken me, and no man knoweth what guiltiness is in me, so well as these two, (who keep my eyes now waking, and my heart heavy,) I mean, my heart and conscience, and my Lord, who is greater than my heart.

Show your brother that I desire him, while he is on the watch-tower, to plead with his mother, and to plead with this land, and to spare not to cry, for the fair crown of my sweet Lord Jesus, that the interdicted and forbidden lords[3] are plucking off his royal head. If I were free of challenges[2] and a High Commission within my soul, I would not give a straw to go to my Father's house, through ten deaths, for the truth and cause of my lovely, lovely One, Jesus! but I walk in heaviness now.

If ye love me, and Christ in me, my dear Lady, pray, pray for this only, that bygones[4] betwixt my Lord and me, may be bygones;[4] and that he would pass from the summons of his High Commission, and seek nothing from me, but what he will do for me, and work in me. If your Ladyship knew me, as I do myself, ye would say, "Poor soul! no marvel." It is not my apprehension that createth this cross to me; it is too real, and hath sad and certain grounds. But I will not believe that God will take this advantage of me when my back is at the wall.[5] He, who forbiddeth to add affliction to affliction, will he do it himself? Why should he pursue a dry leaf and stubble? Desire him to spare me now. Also the memory of the fair feast-days that Christ and I had in his banqueting house-of-wine, and of the scattered flock once committed to me, and now taken off my hand by himself, because I was not so faithful in the end, as I was in the first two years of my entry, when sleep departed from my eyes, because my soul was taken up with a care for Christ's Lambs; even these add sorrow to my sorrow.

Now, my Lord hath only given me this to say, and I write it under mine own hand, (be ye the Lord's servant's witness,) welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet cross of Christ: welcome, welcome, fair, fair, lovely, royal King, with thine own cross! Let us all three go to Heaven together. Neither care I much to go from the south of Scotland to the north; and to be Christ's prisoner amongst unco[6] faces,—a place of this kingdom which I have little reason to be in love with. I know that Christ will make Aberdeen my garden of delights. I am fully persuaded that Scotland shall eat Ezekiel's book, that is written within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and wo, (Ezek. ii. 10,) but the saints shall

[1] Appointed a meeting with me. [2] Self-accusations.
[3] 1 Pet. v. 3. [4] That past offences may be forgiven and forgotten.
[5] That is, when I am in this distressed condition. [6] Strange.

get a drink of the well, that goeth through the streets of the New Jerusalem, to put it down.

Thus, hoping that ye will think upon the poor Prisoner of Christ, I pray that grace, grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh, July 30, 1636.

LETTER LXIII.

TO MR. ROBERT CUNNINGHAM, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT HOLYWOOD, IN IRELAND.

Well-beloved, and Reverend Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace, be to you—Upon acquaintance in Christ, I thought good to take the opportunity of writing to you. Seeing it hath seemed good to the Lord of the harvest to take the hooks[1] out of our hands for a time, and so lay upon us a more honorable service, even to suffer for his name, it were good to comfort one another in writing. I have had a desire to see you in the face, yet now, being the Prisoner of Christ, it is taken away. I am greatly comforted to hear of your stately spirit, for your princely and royal Captain, Jesus Christ, our Lord, and of the grace of God in the rest of our dear brethren with you.

You have heard of my trouble I suppose. It hath pleased our sweet Lord, Jesus, to let loose the malice of these interdicted lords[2] in his house, to deprive me of my ministry at Anwoth, and to confine me, eightscore miles from thence, to Aberdeen; and, also, (which was not done to any before,) to inhibit me to speak at all in the name of Jesus, within this kingdom, under the pain of rebellion. The cause that ripened their hatred was my book against the Arminians, whereof they accused me those three days on which I appeared before them; but, let our crowned King in Zion reign! by his grace the loss is theirs, the advantage is Christ's and truth's. Albeit this honest cross gained some ground on me by my heaviness, and my inward challenges[3] of conscience for a time were sharp, yet now, for the encouragement of you all, I dare say it, and write it under my hand, "*Welcome, welcome, sweet, sweet cross of Christ.*" I verily think that the chains of my Lord Jesus are all overlaid with pure gold, and that his cross is perfumed, and that it smelleth of Christ; and that the victory shall be by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of his truth; and that Christ lying on his back, in his weak servants and oppressed truth, shall ride over his enemies' bellies, and shall "strike through kings in the day of his wrath." It is time that we laugh when he laugheth; and seeing he is now pleased to sit with[4]

[1] Sickles.
[2] The prelates, 1 Pet. v. 3.
[3] Self-accusations.
[4] Bear with in silence.

wrongs for a time, it becometh us to be silent, until the Lord hath let the enemies enjoy their hungry, lean, and feckless[1] paradise. Blessed are they who are content to take strokes with weeping Christ; faith will trust the Lord, and is not hasty, nor headstrong; neither is faith so timorous as to flatter a temptation, or to bud[2] and bribe the cross. It is little up or little down[3] that the Lamb and his followers can get no law-surety, nor truce with crosses; it must be so, till we be up in our Father's house.

My heart is wo[4] indeed for my mother church, that hath played the harlot with many lovers; for her Husband hath a mind to sell her for her horrible transgressions, and heavy will the hand of the Lord be upon this backsliding nation. The ways of our Zion mourn; her gold is become dim, her white Nazarites are black like a coal; how shall the children not weep, when the husband and the mother cannot agree! Yet I believe Scotland's sky will clear again, and that Christ will build again the old waste places of Jacob; and that our dead and dry bones shall become an army of living men; and that our Well-beloved may yet feed among the lilies, until the day break, and the shadows flee away.

My dear brother, let us help one another with our prayers. Our King will mow down his enemies, and will come from Bozrah, with his garments all dyed in blood, and for our consolation will he appear, and call his wife Hephzibah,[5] and his land Beulah;[6] for he will rejoice over us, and marry us, and Scotland will say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Only let us be faithful to Him who can ride through Hell upon a windlestrae[7] and his horse never stumble:—and let him make of me a bridge over a water, so that his high and holy name may be glorified in me. Strokes with the sweet Mediator's hand are very sweet; he has always been sweet to my soul, but since I suffered for him his breath hath a sweeter smell than before. Oh, that every hair of my head, and every member, and every bone in my body, were a man, to witness a fair confession for him! I should think all too little for him. When I look over beyond the line, and beyond death, to the laughing side of the world, I triumph and ride upon the high places of Jacob, howbeit, otherwise I am a faint, dead-hearted, cowardly man, often borne down, and hungry in waiting for the marriage-supper of the Lamb. Nevertheless, I think it the Lord's wise love that feedeth us with hunger, and maketh us fat with wants and desertions.

I know not, my dear brother, if our worthy brethren be gone to

[1] Unsubstantial, unreal.

[2] *Bud* bribe. *To bud and bribe*, as it were to force bribes upon. These alliterative phrases express, in the Scottish dialect, intensity of meaning.

[3] A small matter, of no importance. [4] Grieved.

[5] That is, *my delight is in her*. [6] That is, *married*. Isaiah xlii. 4.

[7] A dead, and withered stalk of crested dog's-tail grass. (*Cynosurus cristatus*.—Lin.) The meaning of Rutherford is that Christ can, by the very feeblest and most contemptible instrumentality, triumphantly conquer all the united powers of Death and Hell.

sea or not: they are on my heart, and in my prayers. If they be yet with you, salute my dear friend John Stuart; my well-beloved brethren in the Lord, Mr. Blair, Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Livingston, and Mr. Macleland, and acquaint them with my troubles, and entreat them to pray for the poor afflicted Prisoner of Christ, they are dear to my soul. I seek your prayers and theirs for my flock; the remembrance of them breaks my heart. I desire to love that people, and others of my dear acquaintance in Christ, with love in God, and as God loveth them. I know that He, who sent me to the West and South, sendeth me also to the North. I shall charge my soul to believe and to wait for him, and shall follow his providence, and not go before it, nor stay behind it.

Now, my dear brother, taking farewell on paper, I commend you to all the word of his grace, and to the work of His Spirit, to Him, who holdeth the Seven Stars in his right hand, that you may be kept spotless till the day of Jesus, our Lord.

I am your brother in affliction,

In our sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

From Irving, being on my journey to Christ's Palace in Aberdeen.
August 4, 1636.

LETTER LXIV.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF EARLSTON.

Much Honored Sir,—I find small hopes of Q.'s business.—I intend, after the council-day, to go on to Aberdeen. The Lord is with me; I care not what man can do. I burden no man, and I want nothing. No king is better provided than I am. Sweet, sweet, and easy is the cross of my Lord. All men whom I look in the face, (of whatsoever rank, nobles and poor, acquaintance and strangers,) are friendly to me. My Well-beloved is some kinder and more warmly[1] than ordinary, and cometh and visiteth my soul. My chains are over-gilded with gold. Only the remembrance of my fair days with Christ in Anwoth, and of my dear flock (whose case is my heart's sorrow,) is vinegar to my sugared wine—yet both sweet and sour feed my soul. No pen, no words, no ingine,[2] can express to you the loveliness of my only, only Lord, Jesus.

Thus, in haste, making for my palace at Aberdeen, I bless you, your wife, your eldest son, and other children.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh, Sept. 5, 1636.

[1] Warm. [2] Genius.

LETTER LXV.

TO ROBERT GORDON, OF KNOCKBREX.

My Dearest Brother,—I see Christ thinking shame,[1] (if I may speak so,) to be in such a poor man's common[2] as mine. I burden no man. I want nothing. No face hath gloomed[3] upon me since I left you. God's sun and fair weather conveyeth me to my time-paradise in Aberdeen. Christ hath so handsomely fitted for my shoulders this rough tree of the cross, as that it hurteth me nowise. My treasure is up in Christ's coffers; my comforts are greater than ye can believe; my pen shall lye for penury of words to write of them. God knoweth that I am filled with the joy of the Holy Ghost. Only the memory of you, my Dearest in the Lord, my flock, and others, keepeth me under, and from being exalted above measure. Christ's sweet sauce hath this sour mixed with it; but oh, such a sweet and pleasant taste!

I find small hopes of Q.'s matter. Thus in haste. Remember me to your wife, and to William Gordon.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh, Sept. 5, 1636.

LETTER LXVI.

TO ROBERT GORDON, OF KNOCKBREX.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—I am, by God's mercy, come now to Aberdeen, the place of my confinement, and settled in an honest man's house. I find the townsmen cold, and general, and dry, in their kindness; yet I find a lodging in the heart of many strangers. My challenges[4] are revived again, and I find old sores are bleeding of new; so dangerous and painful is an undercoted[5] conscience; yet I have an eye to the blood that is physic for such sores. But verily, I see that Christianity is conceived to be more easy and lighter than it is; so that I sometimes think, that I never knew anything but the letters of that name; for our nature contenteth itself with little in godliness. Our "Lord, Lord," seemeth to us, ten "Lords, Lords." Little holiness in our balance is much because it is our holiness; and we love to lay small burdens on our soft natures, and to make a fair court-way to Heaven; and I know it were necessary to take more pains than we do, and not to make Heaven a city more easily taken than God hath made it. I persuade myself that

[1] Ashamed. [2] Under obligation to. [3] Frowned.
[4] Self-accusations. [5] Festering under the skin.

many runners will come short and shall get a disappointment. Oh! how easy is it to deceive ourselves, and to sleep and wish that Heaven may fall down into our laps!

Yet for all my Lord's glooms,[1] I find him sweet, gracious, loving, kind; and I want both pen and words to set forth the fairness, beauty, and sweetness, of Christ's love, and the honor of this cross of Christ, which is glorious to me, though the world thinketh shame[2] thereof. I verily think that the cross of Christ would blush and think shame[3] of those thin-skinned worldlings, who are so married to their credit that they are ashamed of the sufferings of Christ. Oh the honor to be scourged and stoned with Christ, and to go through a furious faced death to life eternal!—but men would have law-burrows[4] against Christ's Cross.

Now, my dear brother, forget not the prisoner of Christ; for I see very few here who kindly fear God. Grace be with you. Let my love in Christ, and hearty affection, be remembered to your kind wife, and to your brother, John, and to all friends. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 20, 1636.

LETTER LXVII.

FOR WILLIAM FULLERTON, PROVOST OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

Much Honored, and very Dear Friend,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—I am in good case, blessed be the Lord, remaining here in this unco[5] town, a prisoner for Christ and His truth: and I am not ashamed of His cross; my soul is comforted with the consolations of His sweet presence for whom I suffer.

I earnestly entreat you to give your honor and authority to Christ, and for Christ; and be not dismayed for flesh and blood, while you are for the Lord, and for His truth and cause. And, howbeit, we see truth put to the worse for the time, yet Christ will be a friend to truth, and will do for[6] those, who dare hazard all that they have for Him, and for His glory. Sir, our fair day is coming, and the court will change, and wicked men shall weep after noon, and sorer than the sons of God, who weep in the morning. Let us believe and hope for God's salvation.

Sir, I hope that I need not write to you for your kindness and love to my brother, who is now to be distressed for the truth of God, as well as I am. I think myself obliged to pray for you and your worthy and kind bed-fellow and children, for your love to Him and me also. I hope your pains for us in Christ shall not be lost.

[1] Frowns. [2] Is ashamed. [3] Be ashamed.
[4] Security obtained from one on swearing the peace against him.
[5] Strange. [6] Act for.

Thus recommending you to the tender mercy and loving-kindness of God, I rest,

Your very loving and affectionate brother, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 21, 1636.

LETTER LXVIII.

TO HIS PARISHIONERS AT ANWOTH.

Dearly Beloved in our Lord,—Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord, Jesus Christ, be multiplied upon you.

I long exceedingly to hear of your on-going and advancement in your journey to the Kingdom of God. My only joy out of Heaven is to hear that the seed of God sown among you is growing, and coming to a harvest; for I ceased not, while I was among you, in season and out of season, (according to the measure of grace given unto me,) to warn and to stir up your minds; and I am free from the blood of all men; for I have communicated to you the whole counsel of God. And I now, again, charge, and warn you, in the great, and dreadful name, and in the sovereign authority of the King of kings and Lord of lords; and I beseech you also by the mercies of God, and by the bowels of Christ, by your appearance before Christ Jesus, our Lord, by all the plagues that are written in God's book, by your part of the holy city, the New Jerusalem, that ye keep the truth of God as I delivered it to you before many witnesses, in the sight of God and His holy angels; for now the last days are come and coming, when many forsake Christ Jesus, and He saith to you, "Will ye also leave me?"

Remember that I forewarned you to forbear the dishonoring of the Lord's blessed name, in swearing, blaspheming, cursing, and the profaning of the Lord's Sabbath; willing you to give that day from morning to night to praying, praising, hearing of the Word, conferring, and speaking, not your own words, but God's words; thinking and meditating on God's nature, word and works: and that every day, at morning and at night, (at least,) ye should sanctify the Lord, by praying in your houses, publicly, in the hearing of all; that ye should in any sort forbear the receiving the Lord's Supper but after the form that I delivered it to you, according to the example of Christ our Lord; that is, that ye should sit, as banqueters, at one table with our King, and eat and drink, and divide the elements one to another:—the timber and stones of the church walls shall bear witness that my soul was refreshed with the comforts of God in that supper:—and that crossing in baptism was unlawful, and against Christ's ordinance; and that no day, (besides the Sabbath, which is of his own appointment,) should be kept holy, and sanctified with preaching and the public

worship of God, for the memory of Christ's birth, death, resurrection, and ascension; seeing such days so observed are unlawful, will-worship, and not warranted in Christ's word: and that everything in God's worship, not warranted by Christ's testament and word, was unlawful: and, also, that idolatry, worshipping of God before hallowed creatures, and adoring of Christ, by kneeling before bread and wine, was unlawful: and that ye should be humble, sober, modest, forbearing pride, envy, malice, wrath, hatred, contention, debate, lying, slandering, stealing, and defrauding your neighbors, in grass, corn or cattle, in buying or selling, borrowing or lending, taking or giving, in bargains or covenants: and that ye should work with your own hands, and be content with that which God hath given you: that ye should study to know God, and His will, and keep in mind the doctrine of the Catechism, which I taught you carefully, and speak of it in your houses, and in the fields, when ye lie down at night, and rise in the morning: that ye should believe in the Son of God, and obey His commandments, and learn to make your accounts in time with the Judge; because death and judgment are before you.

And if ye have now penury, and want of that word which I delivered to you in abundance—yea, (to God's honor I speak it, without arrogating anything to myself, who am but a poor, empty man,) ye had as much of the word, in nine years, while I was among you, as some others have had in many—mourn for your loss of time and repent. My soul pitieth you, that you should suck dry breasts, and be put to draw at dry wells. Oh, that ye would esteem highly the Lamb of God, your Well-beloved, Christ Jesus, whose virtues and praises I preached unto you with joy, and which He did countenance and accompany with some power; and that ye would call to mind the many fair days and glorious feasts in our Lord's house-of-wine, that ye and I have had with Christ Jesus!

But if there be any among you who take liberty to sin, because I am removed from amongst you, and forget that word of truth which ye heard, and turn the grace of God into wantonness, I here, under my hand, in the name of Christ, my Lord, write to such persons all the plagues of God, and all the curses that ever I preached in the pulpit of Anwoth against the children of disobedience: and, as the Lord liveth, the Lord Jesus will make good what I write unto you. Therefore, dearly-beloved, fulfil my joy: fear the great and dreadful name of the Lord: seek God with me. Scotland's judgment sleepeth not: awake, and repent! The sword of the Lord shall go from the north to the south, from the east to the west, and through all the corners of the land; and that sword shall be drunk with your blood among the first; and I shall stand up as a witness against you, if ye do not amend your ways and your doings, and turn to the Lord with all your heart.

I beseech you also, my dearly-beloved in the Lord, my joy, and my crown, be not offended at the sufferings of me, the prisoner of Jesus Christ. I am filled with joy and with the comforts of God.

Upon my salvation, I know and am persuaded, that it is for God's truth, and the honor of my King and royal Prince, Jesus, that I now suffer:—and howbeit this town be my prison, yet Christ hath made it my palace, a garden of pleasures, a field and orchard of delights. I know likewise, albeit I be in bonds, hat yet the word of God is not in bonds; my spirit also is in free-ward.[1] Sweet, sweet have his comforts been to my soul; my pen, tongue, and heart, have not words to express the kindness, love and mercy, of my Well-beloved to me, in this house of my pilgrimage.

I charge you to fear and to love Christ; and to seek a house not made with hands, your Father's house above. This laughing and white-skinned world beguileth you; and if ye seek it more than God, it will play you a slip, to the endless sorrow of your heart. Alas, I could not make many of you to fall in love with Christ; howbeit I endeavored to speak much good of him, and to commend him to you, which as it was your sin, so it is my sorrow! yet, once again, suffer me to exhort, beseech, and obtest you, in the Lord, to think of his love, and to be delighted with him, who is altogether lovely:—I give you the word of a King, that ye will not repent it.

Ye are in my prayers night and day; I cannot forget you: I do not eat, I do not drink, but I pray for you all.

I entreat you all, and every one of you, to pray for me. Grace, grace be with you.

Your lawful, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 23, 1637.

LETTER LXIX.

TO THE NOBLE, AND CHRISTIAN LADY, THE VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

My very Honorable, and dear Lady,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I cannot forget your Ladyship, and that sweet child. I desire to hear what the Lord is doing to you and him:—to write to me were charity. I cannot but write to my friends, that Christ hath trysted[2] me in Aberdeen; and my adversaries have sent me here to be feasted with love-banquets, with my royal, high, high, and princely King, Jesus. Madam, why should I smother Christ's honesty? I dare not conceal his goodness to my soul; he looked fremmed[3] and unco like[4] upon me, when I came first here; but I believe himself better than his looks. I shall not again quarrel with Christ for a gloom,[5] now that he hath taken the mask off his face, and saith, "Kiss thy fill;" and what can I have more, whill I get great heaven in my little arms? Oh, how sweet

[1] Hath liberty of egress.
[2] Appointed me to meet him.
[3] Distant, strange in manner.
[4] Apparently strange and reserved in manner.
[5] A frown.

are the sufferings of Christ, for Christ! God forgive them that raise an ill report upon the sweet cross of Christ; it is but our weak and dim eyes, that look but to the black side, that maketh us mistake. Those who can take that crabbed tree handsomely upon their back, and fasten it on cannily,[1] shall find it such a burden as wings are unto a bird, or sails to a ship. Madam, rue not of your having chosen the better part. Upon my salvation, this is Christ's truth which I now suffer for. If I found but cold comfort[2] in my sufferings, I would not beguile others; I should have told you plainly. But the truth is, Christ's crown, his sceptre, and the freedom of his kingdom, is that which is now called in question; because we will not allow that Christ ought to pay tribute, and be a vassal to the shields of the earth; therefore, the sons of our mother are angry at us. But it becometh not Christ to hold any man's stirrup. It were a sweet and honorable death to die for the honor of that royal and princely king, Jesus. His love is as a mystery to the world. I would not have believed that there was so much in Christ as there is. "Come and see," maketh Christ to be known in his excellency and glory. I wish all this nation knew how sweet his breath is. It is little to see Christ in a book, as men do the world in a card;[3] they talk of Christ by the book and the tongue, and no more, but to come nigh Christ, and hause[4] him, and embrace him, is another thing. Madam, I write to your honor, for your encouragement in that honorable profession which Christ hath honored you with. Ye have gotten the sunny side of the brae,[5] and the best of Christ's good things; he hath not given you the bastard's portion; and, howbeit ye get strokes, and sour looks from your Lord, yet believe his love more than your own feeling, for this world can take nothing from you that is truly yours, and death can do you no wrong. Your rock doth not ebb and flow, but your sea. That which Christ hath said, he will bide by.[6] He will be your tutor. Ye shall not get your charters of Heaven to play yourself with. It is good that ye have lost your credit with Christ, and that Lord Freewill shall not be your tutor. Christ will lippen[7] the taking of you to Heaven neither to yourself nor any deputy, but only to himself—blessed be your Tutor! When your Head shall appear, your Bridegroom and Lord, your day shall then dawn, and it will never have an afternoon, nor an evening shadow. Let your child be Christ's: let him stay beside you as the Lord's pledge, that you shall willingly render again, if God will. Madam, I find folks here kind to me, but in the night and under their breath. My Master's cause may not come to the crown of the causeway.[8] Others are kind according to their fashion. Many think me a

[1] Prudently, with skilful adaptation.
[2] Discouragement.
[3] Chart.
[4] Clasp around the neck, embrace.
[5] Slope, declivity. *Sunny side of the brae*, a proverbial expression, denoting the most sheltered, warm, plentiful, and comfortable situation.
[6] Stand to.
[7] Intrust.
[8] *To come to the crown of the causeway*, to appear openly in public, without fear or shame.

strange man, and my cause not good; but I care not much for man's thoughts or approbation.

I think no shame[1] of the cross. The preachers of this town pretend great love, but the prelates have added to the rest this gentle cruelty, (for so they think it,) to discharge me of the pulpits of this town. The people murmur and cry out against it: and to speak truly, (howbeit Christ is most indulgent to me otherwise,) my silence on the Lord's day keepeth me from being exalted above measure, and from startling[2] in the heat of my Lord's love. Some people affect me; for the which cause, I hear the preachers here propose to have my confinement changed to another place; so cold is northern love: but Christ and I will bear it. I have wrestled long with this sad silence. I said, What aileth Christ at my service? and my soul hath been at a pleading with Christ, and at yea and nay; but I will yield to him, providing my suffering may preach more than my tongue did; for I gave not Christ an inch, but for twice as good again:—in a word, I am a fool, and he is God. I shall hold my peace hereafter.

Let me hear from your Ladyship, and your dear child. Pray for a prisoner of Christ, who is mindful of your Ladyship. Remember my obliged obedience to my good Lady Mar. Grace, grace be with you. I write and pray blessings to your sweet child.

Yours, in all dutiful obedience, in his only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Nov. 22, 1636.

LETTER LXX.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, AND CHRISTIAN LADY, MY LADY VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

Madam,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I received your Ladyship's letter. It refreshed me in my heaviness. The blessing and prayers of a prisoner of Christ come upon you. Since my coming hither, Galloway hath sent me not a line, except what my brother, Earlston, and his son did write. I cannot get my papers transported: but madam, I want not kindness of One who hath the gate[3] of it; Christ, (if he had never done more for me since I was born,) hath engaged my heart, and gained my blessing, in this house of my pilgrimage. It pleaseth my Well-beloved to dine with a poor prisoner, and the King's spikenard casteth a fragrant smell. Nothing grieveth me but that I eat my feasts alone, and that I cannot edify his saints. Oh, that this nation knew what is betwixt him and me; none would scaur[4] at the cross of Christ! My silence eateth me up: but he hath told me

[1] Am not ashamed.

[2] *To startle*, to run about in a wild and excited manner, as cattle do in hot weather when stung by the gadfly. Rutherford means that his forced silence on the Lord's day kept him from being exalted, by his persecutions, above measure.

[3] Way. [4] Boggle.

that he thanketh me no less than if I were preaching daily. He seeth how gladly I would be at it; and, therefore, my wages are going to the fore[1] up in Heaven, as if I were still preaching Christ. Captains pay duly bedfast soldiers, howbeit they dow not[2] march nor carry armor. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of my Lord, and my Lord shall be my strength, (Isa. xlix. 5.) My garland,—the "Banished Minister" —the term of Aberdeen—ashameth me not. I have seen the white side of Christ's cross—lovely hath he been to his oppressed servant! (Psal. cxlvi. 7, 8, 9,) "The Lord executeth judgment for the oppressed; he giveth food to the hungry: the Lord looseth the prisoner; the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord preserveth the stranger." If it were come to exchanging of crosses, I would not exchange my cross with any: I am well pleased with Christ, and he with me; I hope that none shall hear us.[3] It is true, that for all this I get my meat with many strokes, and am seven times a day up and down, and am often anxious and cast down for the case of my oppressed brother; yet I hope that the Lord will be surety for his servant. But now, upon some weak, very weak experience, I am come to love a rumbling, and raging devil best: seeing we must have a devil to hold the saints waking, I wish a cumbersome devil, rather than a secure and sleeping one. At my first coming hither, I took the dorts[4] at Christ, and took up a stomach against him. I said he had cast me over the dyke[5] of the vineyard like a dry tree. But it was his mercy, I see, that the fire did not burn the dry tree: and now, as if my Lord Jesus had done that fault, and not I who belied my Lord, he hath made the first mends,[6] and he spake not one word against me; but he hath come again and quickened my soul with his presence; nay, now I think the very annuity[7] and casualties of the cross of Christ Jesus, my Lord, and those comforts that accompany it, better than the world's set rent.[8] O how many rich off-fallings are in my King's house! I am persuaded, and dare pawn my salvation on it, that it is Christ's truth which I now suffer for. I know that his comforts are no dreams; he would not put his seal on blank paper, nor deceive his afflicted ones that trust in him. Your Ladyship wrote to me that ye are an ill scholar. Madam, ye must go in at Heaven's gates, and your book in your hand, still learning. Ye have had your own large share of troubles, and a double portion; but it saith that your Father counteth you not a bastard—full-begotten bairns[9] are nurtured,[10] (Heb. xii. 8.)

I long to hear of the child. I write the blessings of Christ's Prisoner and the mercies of God to him. Let him be Christ's and

[1] Running to account, in the course of being laid up in store.
[2] Have not ability. [3] Prov. xiv. 10. [4] Pet, sulks.
[5] Wall. [6] First made amends. [7] Quit-rent. [8] Full rent.
[9] Legitimate children, by the same parents on both sides, in contradistinction to children who are by the same parent on the one side, but by different parents on the other. [10] Corrected.

yours betwixt you, but let Christ be whole play-maker;[1] let him be the lender, and ye the borrower, not an owner.

Madam, it is not long since I wrote to your Ladyship, that Christ is keeping mercy for you; and I bide by it still, and now I write it under my hand. Love him dearly. Win in[2] to see him. There is in him that which you never saw. He is aye nigh, he is a tree of life, green and blossoming, both summer and winter. There is a nick[3] in Christianity, to the which whosoever cometh they see and feel more than others can do. I invite you of new to come to him. "Come and see" will speak better things of him, than I can do: "Come nearer" will say much. God never thought this world a portion worthy of you; he would not even[4] you to a gift of dirt and clay; nay, he will not give you Esau's portion; but reserve the inheritance of Jacob for you. Are ye not well married now? Have ye not a good husband now?

My heart cannot express what sad nights I have for the Virgin Daughter of my people; wo is me, for our time is coming. (Ezek. vii. 10,) "Behold, the day, behold, it is come, the morning is gone forth, the rod hath blossomed, pride hath budded: violence is risen up into a rod of wickedness;" the sun is gone down upon our prophets. A dry wind upon Scotland, but neither to fan nor cleanse; but out of all question, when the Lord hath cut down his forest, the after-growth of Lebanon shall flourish. They shall plant vines in our mountain, and a cloud shall yet fill the Temple. Now the blessing of our dearest Lord, Jesus, and the blessing of him that is separated from his brrethen, come upon you.

Yours, at Aberdeen, the Prisoner of Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER LXXI.

TO MR. HUGH MACKAIL.

Reverend and Dear Brother,—I thank you for your letter. I cannot but show you, that as I never expected anything from Christ but much good and kindness, so he hath made me to find it in the house of my pilgrimage. And believe me, brother, I give it to you under mine own hand-writ, that, whoso looketh to the white side of Christ's cross, and can take it up handsomely with faith and courage, will find it such a burden as sails are to a ship or wings to a bird. I find that my Lord hath over-gilded that black tree, and hath perfumed it, and oiled it, with joy and consolation. Like a fool, once I would chide and plead with Christ, and slander him to others of unkindness: but I trust in God, not to call his glooms[5] unkind again; for he hath taken from me my sackcloth; and I, verily, cannot tell you, what a

[1] Sole director. [2] Get in. [3] Notch, degree.
[4] *To even*, disparagingly to equal to. [5] Frowns.

poor, sold Joseph and prisoner, (with whom my mother's children were angry,) doth now think of kind Christ. I shall chide no more, providing he will quit me all by-gones,[1] for I am poor. I am taught, in this ill-weather, to go on the lee-side of Christ, and to put him in between me and the storm. I thank God I walk on the sunny side of the brae.[2] I write it, that ye may speak in my behalf the praises of my Lord to others, that my bonds may preach. Oh if[3] all Scotland knew the feasts, and love-blinks,[4] and visits, that the prelates have sent me to! I will verily give my Lord Jesus a free discharge of all, that I, like a fool, laid to his charge, and beg him pardon to the mends.[5] God grant, that, in my temptations, I come not on his wrong side again, and never again fall a raving against my Physician, in my fever!

Brother, plead with your mother, while ye have time. A pulpit would be a high feast to me; but I dare not say one word against Him, who hath done it. I am out of the house as yet; my sweet Master saith I shall have house-room at his own elbow, albeit their synagogue will need-force[6] cast me out.

A letter were a work of charity to me. Grace be with you. Pray for me.

Your brother, and Christ's Prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, Nov. 22, 1636.

LETTER LXXII.

TO JOHN FLEMING, BAILLIE[7] OF LEITH.

My very Dear Friend,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you. I received your letter. I bless my Lord that, through Jesus Christ, I find his word good, (Isa. xlviii. 10,) "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;" and, (Psal. xci. 15,) "I will be with him in trouble." I never expected other at Christ's hand than much good and comfort; and I am not disappointed. I find my Lord's cross over-gilded and oiled with comforts. My Lord hath now shown me the white side of his cross. I would not exchange my weeping in prison with the Fourteen Prelates' laughter, amidst their hungry and lean joys. This world knoweth not the sweetness of Christ's love: it is a mystery to them.

At my first coming here, I found great heaviness, especially because it had pleased the prelates to add this gentle cruelty to my former sufferings, (for it is gentle to them,) to inhibit the ministers of the town to give me the liberty of a pulpit. I said, What aileth Christ at my service? but I was a fool; he hath chided himself friends with me. If ye, and others of God's children will praise

[1] Former offences.
[2] Slope. *Sunny side of the brae*, the most sheltered, warm, and comfortable situation.
[3] Oh that. [4] Gleams, glimpses. [5] To boot. [6] Under plea of necessity.
[7] A magistrate in a Scottish borough, analogous to an alderman in an English one.

His great name, who maketh worthless men witnesses for him, my silence and sufferings shall preach more than my tongue could do. If his glory be seen in me, I am satisfied. I want for no kindness of Christ. And, sir, I dare not smother his liberality. I write it to you, that ye may praise, and desire your brother and others to join with me in this work.

This land shall be made desolate. Our iniquities are full. The Lord saith that we shall drink, and spue, and fall. Remember my love to your good, kind wife. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Nov. 23, 1636.

LETTER LXXIII.

TO EARLSTON, ELDER.

"And they overcame the Dragon by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony: and they loved not their lives unto the death."—(Rev. xii. 11.)

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—I long to see you on paper, and to be refreshed by you.

I cannot but desire you, and charge you, to help me to praise Him, who feedeth a poor prisoner with the fatness of his house. Oh, how weighty is his love! Oh, but there is much telling in Christ's kindness! The Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, hath paid me my hundred-fold, well-told and one to the hundred. I complained of him, but he is owing me nothing now. Sir, I charge you to help me to praise his goodness, and to proclaim to others my Bridegroom's kindness, whose love is better than wine.

I took up an action against Christ, and bought a plea[1] against his love, and libelled unkindness against Christ, my Lord; and I said, "This is my death, he hath forgotten me," but my meek Lord held his peace, and beheld me, and would not contend for the last word of flyting,[2] and now he hath chided himself friends with me; and now I see that he must be God, and I must be flesh. I pass from my summons. I acknowledge that he might have given me my fill of it, and never troubled himself; but now he hath taken away the mask; I have been comforted; he could not smother his love any longer to a prisoner and a stranger—God grant that I may never buy a plea[1] against Christ again, but may keep good quarters with him!

I want no[3] kindness, no love-tokens; but oh, wise is his love! for, notwithstanding this hot summer-blink,[4] I am kept low with the grief of my silence; for his word is in me as a fire in my bowels; and I see the Lord's vineyard laid waste, and the heathen entered into the sanctuary; and my belly is pained, and my soul

[1] Controversy. [2] Scolding. [3] Am not in want of.
[4] Gleam of the sun breaking through the clouds.

in heaviness, because the Lord's people are gone into captivity, and because of the fury of the Lord, and that wind (but neither to fan nor purge) which is coming upon apostate Scotland. I am also kept awake with the late wrong done to my brother; but I trust that ye will counsel and comfort him. Yet in this mist, I see, and believe, that the Lord will heal this halting kirk, and will lay her stones with fair colors, and her foundations with sapphires, and will make her windows of agates, and her gates carbuncles, (Isa. liv. 11, 12,) and for brass he will bring gold. He hath created the smith that formed the sword; no weapon in war shall prosper against us. Let us be glad, and rejoice in the Lord, for his salvation is near to come.

Remember me to your wife and your son, John: and I entreat you to write to me. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Dec. 30, 1636.

LETTER LXXIV.

TO THE LADY CULROSS.

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."—(Rev. vii. 14.)

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you. I greatly long to be refreshed with your letter.

I am now, (all honor and glory to the King eternal, immortal, and invisible!) in better terms with Christ than I was. I, like a fool, summoned my Husband and Lord, and libelled unkindness against him: but now I pass from that foolish pursuit, I give over the plea [1]—he is God, and I am man. I was loosing a fast stone, and digging at the ground-stone,[2] the love of my Lord, to shake and unsettle it; but, God be thanked, it is fast: all is sure. In my prison, he hath shown me day-light; he dought not[3] hide his love any longer. Christ was disguised and masked, and I apprehended it was not he; and he hath said, "It is I, be not afraid!" and now his love is better than wine.

Oh, that all the virgins had part of the Bridegroom's love, whereupon he maketh me to feed! Help me to praise: I charge you, madam, help me to pay praises; and tell others, the daughters of Jerusalem, how kind Christ is to a poor prisoner. He hath paid me my hundred-fold; it is well told me, and one to the hundred. I am nothing behind with Christ. Let not fools, because of their lazy and soft flesh, raise a slander and an ill report upon the cross of Christ: it is sweeter than fair.

I see that grace groweth best in winter. This poor persecuted kirk, this lily among the thorns, shall blossom and laugh upon the Gardener; the Husbandman's blessing shall light upon it. Oh,

[1] Controversy. [2] Foundation. [3] Was not able to.

if[1] I could be free of jealousies[2] of Christ after this; and believe, and keep good quarters with my dearest Husband! for he hath been kind to the stranger; and yet, in all this fair, hot summer-weather, I am kept from saying, "It is good to be here," with my silence, and with grief to see my Mother wounded, and her veil taken from her, and the fair temple casten down; and my belly is pained, my soul is heavy for the captivity of the Daughter of my people, and because of the fury of the Lord, and his fierce indignation against apostate Scotland.

I pray you, madam, to let me have that which is my prayer here, that my sufferings may preach to the four quarters of this land; and, therefore, tell others how open-handed Christ hath been to the prisoner, and the oppressed stranger—why should I conceal it? I know no other way how to glorify Christ, than to make an open proclamation of his love, and of his soft and sweet kisses to me in the furnace, and of his fidelity to such as suffer for him.

Give it me under your hand, that ye will help me to pray, and praise; but rather to praise and rejoice in the salvation of God. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his dearest, and only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Dec. 30, 1636.

LETTER LXXV.

TO WILLIAM GORDON, OF ROBERTON.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—So often as I think on our case, in our soldier's night-watch, and of our fighting-life in the fields, while we are here, I am forced to say, prisoners in a dungeon, condemned by a judge to want the light of the sun, and moon, and candle till their dying day, are no more, nay, not so much, to be pitied as we are. For they are weary of their life, they hate their prison; but we fall-to, in our prison, where we see little, to drink ourselves drunk with the night-pleasures of our weak dreams; and we long for no better life than this: but, at the blast of the Last Trumpet, and the shout of the Archangel, when God shall take down the shepherd's tent of this fading world, we shall have not so much as a drink of water of all the dreams that we now build on. Alas! that the sharp and bitter blasts on face and sides, which meet us in this life, have not learned us mortification, and made us dead to this world! We buy our own sorrow, and we pay dear for it, when we spend out our love, our joy, our desires, our confidence, upon a handful of snow and ice, which time shall melt away to nothing, and go thirsty out of the drunken inn when all is done. Alas! that we inquire not for the clear fountain! but are so foolish as to drink foul, muddy, and rotten waters, even till our bed-time; and then,

[1] Oh that. [2] Suspicions.

in the Resurrection, when we shall be awakened, our yesternight's sour drink, and swinish dregs shall rift[1] up upon us; and sick, sick shall many a soul be then.

I know not a wholesome fountain but one: I know not a thing worth the buying, but Heaven. And my own mind is, that if comparison were made betwixt Christ and Heaven, I would sell Heaven with my blessing to buy Christ. Oh, if[2] I could raise the market for Christ, and heighten the market a pound for a penny, and cry up Christ in men's estimation ten thousand talents more than men think of him! But they are shaping him, and crying him down, to valuing him at their unworthy halfpenny; or else exchanging and bartering Christ with the miserable old fallen house of this vain world: or then[3] they lend him out upon interest, and play the usurers with Christ. Because they profess him, and give out before men that Christ is their treasure and stock; and, in the meantime, praise of men, and a name, and ease, and the summer-sun of the Gospel, is the usury they would be at; so when the trial cometh, they quit the stock for the interest, and lose all. Happy are they who can keep Christ by himself alone, and keep him clean and whole till God come and count with them.

I know that in your hard and heavy trials long since, ye thought well and highly of Christ. But truly no cross should be old to us; we should not forget them because years are come betwixt us and them, and cast them by hand,[4] as we do old clothes. We may make a cross old in time, new in use, and as fruitful as in the beginning of it. God is where, and what he was seven years ago, whatever change be in us. I speak not this as if I thought that ye had forgotten what God did to have your love long since; but that ye may awake yourself, in this sleepy age, and remember fruitfully Christ's first wooing and suiting[5] of your love, both with fire and water; and try if he got his answer, or if ye be yet to give it him. For I find in myself that water runneth not faster through a sieve than our warnings slip from us; for I have lost and casten by-hand[6] many summonses which the Lord hath sent me; and, therefore, the Lord hath given me double charges, that I trust in God shall not rive me. I bless His great name, who is no niggard in holding in crosses upon me, but spendeth largely his rods, that he may save me from this perishing world. How plentiful God is in means of this kind is esteemed, by many, one of God's unkind mercies; but Christ's cross is neither a cruel nor an unkind mercy, but the love-token of a father. I am sure that a lover, chasing us for our well, and to have our love, should not be run away from, nor fled from. God send me no worse mercy than the sanctified cross of Christ portendeth, and I am sure that I should be happy and blessed.

Pray for me, that I may find house-room in the Lord's house to

1 Belch. 2 Oh that. 3 Otherwise.
4 Aside. 5 Urging a suit. 6 Cast aside.

speak in his name. Remember, my dearest love, in Christ, to your wife. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord, Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1636.

LETTER LXXVI.

TO JOHN KENNEDY, BAILLIE OF AYR.

Worthy, and Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to see you in this northern world on paper; I know it is not forgetfulness that ye write not. I am every way in good case, both in soul and body; all honor and glory be to my Lord: I want nothing but a further revelation of the beauty of the unknown Son of God. Either I know not what Christianity is, or we have stinted a measure of so many ounce weights and no more upon holiness; and there we are at a stand, drawing our breath all our life—a moderation in God's way, now, is much in request. I profess that I have never taken pains to find out Him whom my soul loveth; there is a gate[1] yet of finding out Christ that I have never lighted upon. Oh if[2] I could find it out! Alas, how soon are we pleased with our own shadow in a glass! It were good to be beginning in sad earnest[3] to find out God, and to seek the right tread of Christ. Time, custom, and a good opinion of ourselves, our good meaning, and our lazy desires, our fair shows, and the world's glistering lustres, and these broad passments[4] and buskings[5] of religion, that bear bulk in the Kirk, is that wherewith most satisfy themselves; but a bed watered with tears, a throat dry with praying, eyes as a fountain of tears for the sins of the land, are rare to be found among us. Oh if[2] we could know the power of godliness!

This is one part of my case; and another is, that I like a fool, once summoned Christ for unkindness, and complained of his fickleness and inconstancy, because he would have no more of my service nor preaching, and had casten me out of the inheritance of the Lord; and now I confess that this was but a bought plea, and I was a fool; yet he hath borne with me. I gave him a fair advantage against me, but love and mercy would not let him take it; and the truth is, now he hath chided himself friends with me, and hath taken away the mask, and hath renewed his wonted favor in such a manner, that he hath paid me my hundred-fold in this life, and one to the hundred. This prison is my banqueting house; I am handled as softly and delicately as a dawted[6] child. I am nothing behind, (I see,) with Christ; he can, in a month, make up a year's losses. And I write this to you, that I may entreat, nay, abjure and charge you, by the love of our Well-be-

[1] Way. [2] Oh that. [3] Sober earnest.
[4] Strips of lace sewed on garments, gaudy ornaments
[5] Deckings. [6] Fondled.

loved, to help me to praise; and to tell all your Christian acquaintance to help me, for I am as deeply drowned in his debt as any dyvour[1] can be: and yet in this fair sunblink,[2] I have something to keep me from startling,[3] or being exalted above measure—his word is as fire shut up in my bowels, and I am weary with forbearing. The ministers in this town are saying that they will have my prison changed into less bounds, because they see God with me. My mother hath borne me a man of contention, one that striveth with the whole earth. The late wrongs and oppressions done to my brother keep my sails low: yet I defy crosses to embark me in such a plea against Christ as I was troubled with of late. I hope to over-hope and over-believe my troubles; I have cause now to trust Christ's promise more than his gloom.[4]

Remember my hearty affection to your wife. My soul is grieved for the success of our brethren's journey to New England;[5] but God hath somewhat to reveal that we see not. Grace be with you. Pray for the prisoner.

Yours, in his only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Jan. 1, 1637.

LETTER LXXVII.

TO MY LORD BOYD.

My very Honorable, and Good Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Lordship.—Out of the worthy report I hear of your Lordship's zeal for this borne-down and oppressed Gospel, I am bold to write to your Lordship, beseeching you by the mercies of God, by the honor of our royal and princely King, Jesus, by the sorrows, tears, and desolation of your afflicted Mother-church, and by the peace of your conscience, and your joy in the day of Christ, that your Lordship would go on, in the strength of your Lord, and in the power of his might, to bestir yourself, for the vindicating of the fallen honor of your Lord Jesus. Oh, blessed hands for evermore, that shall help to put the crown upon the head of Christ again in Scotland! I dare promise in the name of our Lord, that this will fasten and fix the pillars and the stakes of your honorable house upon earth if you lend and lay in pledge in Christ's hand, (upon spiritual hazard,) life, estate, house, honor, credit, moyen,[6] friends, the favor of men, (suppose kings with three crowns,) so being that ye may bear witness, and acquit yourself as a man of valor and courage, to the Prince of your salvation, for the purging of his temple, and sweeping out the lordly Diotrepheses, time-courting Demases, corrupt Hymaneuses and Philetuses, and other such oxen, that with their dung defile the Temple

[1] Bankrupt. [2] Gleam of the sun.
[3] Over excitement, an allusion to the wild and excited running about of cattle in a hot day. [4] Frown. [5] See Letter CCL. [6] Interest.

of the Lord. Is not Christ now crying, "Who will help me? who will come out with me, to take part with me, and share in the honor of my victory over these mine enemies, who have said, We will not have this Man to rule over us?"

My very honorable, and dear Lord, join, join as ye do with Christ; he is more worth to you, and your posterity, than this world's may-flowers, and withering riches and honor, that shall go away as smoke, and evanish in a night vision, and shall in one half-hour, after the blast of the Archangel's trumpet, lye in white ashes. Let me beseech your Lordship to draw by[1] the lap of time's curtain, and to look in, through the window, to great and endless eternity, and consider, if a worldly price, (suppose this little round clay globe of this ashy and dirty earth, the dying idol of the fools of this world, were all your own,) can be given for one smile of Christ's God-like and soul-ravishing countenance, in that day, when so many joints and knees of thousand thousands wailing shall stand before Christ, trembling, shouting, and making their prayers to hills and mountains, to fall upon them, and hide them from the face of the Lamb. Oh, how many would sell lordships and kingdoms that day, and buy Christ! But, oh, the market shall be closed and ended ere then! Your Lordship hath now a blessed venture of winning court with the Prince of the kings of the earth: he himself weeping, truth borne down and fallen in the streets, and an oppressed Gospel, Christ's bride with watery eyes, and spoiled of her veil, her hair hanging about her eyes, forced to go in ragged apparel, the banished, silenced, and imprisoned prophets of God, who have not the favor of liberty to prophesy in sackcloth; all these, I say, call for your help. Fear not worms of clay, the moth shall eat them as a garment. Let the Lord be your fear; he is with you, and shall fight for you; thus shall ye cause the blessing of those, who are ready to perish, to come upon you; and ye shall make the heart of this your Mother-church to sing for joy. The Lamb and his armies are with you, and the kingdoms of the earth are the Lord's. I am persuaded that there is not another gospel, nor another saving truth, than that which ye now contend for. I dare hazard my heaven and salvation upon it, that this is the only saving way to glory.

Grace, grace be with your Lordship.

Your Lordship's,

At all respectful obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER LXXVIII.

TO MARGARET BALLANTYNE.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—It is more than time that I should have written to you, but it is yet good

[1] Past. [2] Delusion.

time, if I could help your soul to mend your pace, and to go more swiftly to your heavenly country: for truly ye have need to make all haste, because the inch of your day that remaineth will quickly slip away; for whether we sleep or wake, our glass runneth—the tide bideth no man. Beware of a beguile[1] in the matter of your salvation. Wo, wo for evermore, to them that lose that prize. For what is behind, when the soul is once lost, but that sinners warm their bits of clay-houses at a fire of their own kindling, for a day or two, which doth rather suffocate with its smoke than warm them; and at length they lie down in sorrow, and are clothed with everlasting shame! I would seek no further measure of faith to begin withal than to believe really and stedfastly the doctrine of God's justice, his all-devouring wrath and everlasting burning, where sinners are burnt, soul and body, in a river and great lake of fire and brimstone: then they would wish no more goods than the thousandth part of a cold fountain-well to cool their tongue; they would then buy death with enduring of pain and torment for as many years as God hath created drops of rain since the creation; but there is no market of buying or selling life or death there. Oh, alas! the greatest part of this world run to the place of that torment rejoicing and dancing, eating, drinking, and sleeping. My counsel to you is, that ye start in time to be after Christ; for if ye go quickly, Christ is not far before you, ye shall overtake him. O Lord God, what is so needful as this? "Salvation, salvation!" Fy upon this condemned, and foolish world, that would give so little for salvation! Oh, if there were a free market for salvation proclaimed in that day, when the trumpet of God shall awake the dead, how many buyers would be then! God send me no more happiness than that salvation which the blind world, (to their eternal wo,) letteth slip through their fingers. Therefore, look if ye can give out your money (as Isaiah speaketh, ch. lv. 2,) for bread, and lay Christ and his blood in wadset[2] for Heaven. It is a dry and hungry bairn's part of goods that Esaus are hunting for here. I see thousands following the chase, and in the pursuit of such things, while in the meantime they lose the blessing; and, when all is done, they have caught nothing to roast for supper, but lie down hungry; and, besides, they go to bed when they die, without a candle; for God saith to them, "This shall ye have at my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." (Isaiah l. 11.) And truly this is as ill-made a bed to lie upon as one could wish; for he cannot sleep soundly, nor rest sweetly, who hath sorrow for his pillow. Rouse, rouse up, therefore, your soul, and speer[3] how Christ and your soul met together. I am sure that they never got Christ, who were not once sick at the yolk of the heart for him. Too, too many whole souls think that they have met with Christ, who had never a wearied night for the want of him: but alas! what richer are men, that they dreamed the last night they had much gold, and,

[1] Delusion. [2] Alienation under reversion. [3] Inquire.

when they awoke in the morning, they found it was but a dream? What are all the sinners in the world, in that day when heaven and earth shall go up in a flame of fire, but a number of beguiled dreamers? Every one shall say of his hunting and his conquest,[1] "Behold, it was a dream!" every man in that day will tell his dream. I beseech you, in the Lord Jesus, beware, beware of unsound work in the matter of your salvation: ye may not, ye cannot, ye dow not[2] want Christ; then, after this day, convene all your lovers before your soul, and give them their leave;[3] and strike hands with Christ, that, thereafter, there may be no happiness to you but Christ; no hunting for anything but Christ; no bed at night, when death cometh, but Christ—Christ, Christ, who but Christ! I know this much of Christ, that he is not ill[4] to be found, nor lordly of his love. Wo had been my part of it for evermore, if Christ had made a dainty of himself to me. But, God be thanked, I gave nothing for Christ; and now I protest, before men and angels, that Christ cannot be exchanged, that Christ cannot be sold, that Christ cannot be weighed. Where would angels, or all the world find a balance to weigh him in? All lovers blush when ye stand beside Christ! Wo upon all love but the love of Christ; hunger, hunger for evermore, be upon all heaven but Christ; shame, shame for evermore be upon all glory but Christ's glory. I cry death, death upon all lifes[5] but the life of Christ. Oh, what is it that holdeth us asunder? Oh, that once we could have a fair meeting.

Thus recommending Christ to you, and you to him, for evermore, I rest. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER LXXIX.

TO ROBERT GORDON, OF KNOXBREX.

My Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy and peace be multiplied upon you—I am almost wearying, yea, wondering, that ye write not to me; though I know it is not forgetfulness.

As for myself, I am every way well, all glory to God. I was before at a plea with Christ, but it was bought by me, and unlawful, because his whole providence was not yea and nay to my yea and nay, and, because I believed Christ's outward look better than his faithful promise. Yet he hath in patience waited on, whill I be come to myself, and hath not taken advantage of my weak apprehensions of his goodness,—great, and holy is his name! He looketh to what I desire to be, and not to what I am. One thing I have learned. If I

[1] Acquisition by purchase or industry.
[2] Are not able.
[3] Discharge.
[4] Difficult, hard.
[5] That is, all manner of life, but the life of Christ in the soul.

had been in Christ, by way of adhesion only, as many branches are, I should have been burnt to ashes, and this world would have seen a suffering minister of Christ, (of something once in show,) turned into unsavory salt. But my Lord Jesus had a good eye that the Tempter should not play foul play, and blow out Christ's candle. He took no thought of my stomach, and fretting and grudging humor, but of his own grace. When he burnt the house, he saved his own goods. And I believe that the Devil, and the persecuting world shall reap no fruit of me, but burned ashes: for he will see to his own gold, and save that from being consumed with the fire.

Oh what owe I to the file, to the hammer, to the furnace of my Lord Jesus! who hath now let me see how good the wheat of Christ is, that goeth through his mill, and his oven, to be made bread for his own table. Grace tried is better than grace, and it is more than grace, it is glory in its infancy. I now see that godliness is more than the outside, and this world's passments[1] and their buskings.[2] Who knoweth the truth of grace without a trial? Oh how little getteth Christ of us, but that which he winneth, (to speak so,) with much toil and pains! And how soon would faith freeze without a cross! How many dumb crosses have been laid upon my back, that had never a tongue to speak the sweetness of Christ, as this hath? When Christ blesseth his own crosses with a tongue, they breathe out Christ's love, wisdom, kindness, and care of us. Why should I start at the plough of my Lord, that maketh deep furrows on my soul? I know that he is no idle husbandman, he purposeth a crop. Oh, that this white withered lea-ground[3] were made fertile to bear a crop for Him, by whom it is so painfully dressed; and that this fallow-ground were broken up! Why was I (a fool!) grieved that he put his garland, and his rose upon my head—the glory, and honor of his faithful witnesses? I desire now to make no more pleas[4] with Christ. Verily he hath not put me to a loss by what I suffer; he oweth me nothing: for in my bonds how sweet and comfortable have the thoughts of him been to me, wherein I find a sufficient recompense of reward!

How blind are my adversaries, who sent me to a banqueting-house, to a house-of-wine, to the lovely feasts of my lovely Lord Jesus, and not to a prison, or place of exile! Why should I smother my Husband's honesty, or sin against His love? or be a niggard in giving out to others what I get for nothing?—Brother, eat with me, and give thanks. I charge you before God, that ye speak to others, and invite them to help me to praise! Oh my debt of praise, how weighty it is, and how far run up! Oh that others would lend me to pay, and learn me to praise! Oh I am a drowned dyvour![5] Lord Jesus, take my thoughts for payments. Yet I am in this hot summer-blink[6] with the tear in my eye; for, by reason

[1] Gaudy trappings: passments are strips of lace sewed on garments.
[2] Deckings.
[3] Land in grass, as opposed to *red*, or tilled ground.
[4] Quarrels.
[5] Bankrupt.
[6] Gleam of the sun.

of my silence, sorrow, sorrow hath filled me: my harp is hanged upon the willow trees, because I am in a strange land. I am still kept in exercise with envious brethren; my Mother hath borne me a man of contention.

Write to me your mind anent Y. C.—I cannot forget him; I know not what God hath to do with him:—and your mind anent my parishioners' behavior; and how they are served in preaching, or if there be a minister as yet thrust in upon them, which I desire greatly to know, and which I much fear.

Dear brother, ye are in my heart, to live and to die with you. Visit me with a letter. Pray for me. Remember my love to your wife. Grace, grace be with you: and God, who heareth prayer, visit you, and let it be unto you according to the prayers of

Your own brother, and Christ's prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, January 1, 1637.

LETTER LXXX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

My Dearly-beloved Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I complain that Galloway is not kind to me on paper; I have received no letters these sixteen weeks, but two.

I am well. My prison is a palace to me, and Christ's banqueting-house. My Lord Jesus is as kind as they call Him. Oh, that all Scotland knew my case, and had part of my feast! I charge you, in the name of God, I charge you to believe. Fear not the sons of men, the worms shall eat them. To pray and believe now, when Christ seemeth to give you a nay-say,[1] is more than it was before. Die believing, die with Christ's promise in your hand.

I desire, I request, I charge your husband, and that town to stand for the truth of the Gospel. Contend with Christ's enemies: and I pray you to show all professors that you know my case. Help me to praise. The ministers here envy me; they will have my prison changed. My mother hath borne me a man of contention, and one that striveth with the whole earth.

Remember my love to your husband. Grace be with you.

Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

Aberdeen, Jan. 3, 1637.

LETTER LXXXI.

TO MR. JOHN MEINE.

Worthy and Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I have been too long in answering your letter, but other

1 A denial.

business took me up. I am here waiting, if the fair wind will turn upon Christ's sails in Scotland; and if deliverance be breaking out over this overclouded and benighted Kirk. Oh, that we could contend, by prayers and supplications, with our Lord for that effect! I know that He hath not given out His last doom against this land. I have little of Christ, in this prison, but groanings, and longings, and desires. All my stock of Christ is some hunger for Him, (and yet I cannot say but I am rich in that;) my faith, and hope, and holy practice of new obedience, are scarce worth the speaking of: but blessed be my Lord, who taketh me, light, and clipped, and noughty,[1] and feckless,[2] as I am. I see that Christ will not prig[3] with me, nor stand upon stepping-stones,[4] but cometh in at the broadside[5] without ceremonies, or making it nice,[6] to make a poor ransomed one His own. Oh, that I could feed upon His breathing, and kissing, and embracing, and upon the hopes of my meeting and His, when love-letters shall not go betwixt us, but He will be messenger himself! But there is required patience on our part, till the summer fruit in Heaven be ripe for us. It is in the bud, but there be many things to do before our harvest come: and we take ill with it, and can hardly endure to set our paper-face to one of Christ's storms, and to go to Heaven with wet feet, and pain, and sorrow. We love to carry a heaven to Heaven with us, and would have two summers in one year, and no less than two heavens; but this will not do for us:—one, and such a one! may suffice us well enough:—the Man, Christ, got but one only, and shall we have two?

Remember my love, in Christ, to your father; and help me with your prayers. If ye would be a deep divine, I recommend to you sanctification. Fear Him, and He will reveal His Covenant to you. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Jan. 5, 1637.

LETTER LXXXII.

TO CARDONESS, ELDER.

Much Honored Sir,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—I have longed to hear from you, and to know the estate of your soul, and the estate of that people with you.

I beseech you, sir, by the salvation of your precious soul, and the mercies of God, to make good and sure work of your salvation, and try upon what ground-stone[7] ye have builded. Worthy, and dear sir, if ye be upon sinking sand, a storm of death, and a blast

1 Of nought. 2 Worthless. 3 Chaffer.
4 *To stand upon stepping-stones*, to hesitate. 5 Frankly.
6 *To make it nice in doing a thing*, to be very gingerly about the doing of it.
7 Foundation.

will loose Christ and you, and wash you close[1] off the rock. Oh, for the Lord's sake, look narrowly to the work!

Read over your life, with the light of God's day-light and sun; for salvation is not casten down at every man's door. It is good to look to your compass, and all ye have need of, ere you take shipping; for no wind can blow you back again. Remember, when the race is ended, and the play either won or lost, and ye are in the utmost circle and border of time, and shall put your foot within the march[2] of eternity, and all your good things of this short night-dream shall seem to you like the ashes of a bleeze[3] of thorns or straw, and your poor soul shall be crying, "Lodging, lodging, for God's sake!" then shall your soul be more glad at one of your Lord's lovely, and homely smiles, than if ye had the charters of three worlds for all eternity. Let pleasures and gain, will and desires of this world, be put over into God's hands, as arrested and fenced goods, that ye cannot intromit[4] with. Now, when ye are drinking the grounds of your cup, and ye are upon the utmost end of the last link of time, and old age, like death's long shadow, is casting a covering upon your days, it is no time to court this vain life, and to set love and heart upon it. It is near after-supper;[5] seek rest and ease for your soul, in God through Christ.

Believe me that I find it to be hard wrestling to play fair with Christ, and to keep good quarters with him, and to love him in integrity and life, and to keep a constant course of sound, and solid daily communion with Christ: temptations are daily breaking the thread of that course, and it is not easy to cast a knot again, and many knots make evil work. Oh, how fairly have many ships been plying before the wind, that, in an hour's space, have been lying in the sea-bottom! How many professors cast a golden lustre, as if they were pure gold, and yet are, under that skin and cover, but base and reprobate metal! And how many keep breath in their race many miles, and yet come short of the prize and the garland! Dear sir, my soul would mourn in secret for you, if I knew your case with God to be but false work: love to have you anchored upon Christ maketh me fear your tottering and slips. False under-water,[6] not seen in the ground[7] of an enlightened conscience, is dangerous; so is often failing, and sinning against light. Know this, that those who never had sick nights or days in conscience for sin, cannot have but such a peace with God as will undercoat[8] and break the flesh again, and end in a sad war at death. Oh, how fearfully are thousands beguiled with false hide-grown-over old sins, as if the soul were cured and healed!

Dear sir, I always saw nature mighty, lofty, heady, and strong in you; and, that it was more for you to be mortified and dead to the world, than another common man. Ye will take a low ebb,

[1] Altogether. [2] Boundary.
[3] Anything which burns up suddenly, and is quickly consumed, with a blazing flame. [4] Intermeddle.
[5] The interval between supper and bed-time. [6] Bilge-water.
[7] Bottom. [8] Fester, after having skinned over.

and a deep cut, and a long lance, to go to the bottom of your wounds, in saving humiliation, to make you a won prey for Christ. Be humbled; walk softly; down, down, for God's sake, my dear, and worthy brother, with your top-sail; stoop, stoop! it is a low entry to go in at Heaven's gate. There is infinite justice in the Party ye have to do with; it is His nature not to acquit the guilty, and the sinner. The law of God will not want one farthing of the sinner. God forgetteth not both the cautioner[1] and the sinner; and every man must pay, either in his own person, (oh, Lord save you from that payment!) or in his cautioner,[1] Christ. It is violence to corrupt nature for a man to be holy, to lye down under Christ's feet, to quit will, pleasure, worldly love, earthly hope, and an itching of heart after this farded[2] and over-gilded world, and to be content that Christ trample upon all. Come in, come in to Christ, and see what ye want, and find it in him:—he is the short cut, (as we used to say,) and the nearest way to an outgate[3] of all your burdens. I dare avouch that ye shall be dearly welcome to him; my soul would be glad to take part of the joy ye should have in him. I dare say that angels' pens, angels' tongues, nay, as many worlds of angels, as there are drops of water in all the seas, and fountains, and rivers of the earth, cannot paint him out to you. I think his sweetness, since I was a prisoner, hath swelled upon me to the greatness of two heavens. Oh, for a soul, as wide as the utmost circle of the highest Heaven that containeth all, to contain his love! And yet I could hold little of it. Oh, world's wonder! Oh, if[4] my soul might but lye within the smell of his love, suppose I could get no more but the smell of it! Oh, but it is long to that day when I shall have a free world of Christ's love! Oh, what a sight to be up in Heaven, in that fair orchard of the New Paradise; and to see, and smell, and touch, and kiss, that fair Field-flower, that ever-green Tree of Life! His bare shadow were enough for me; a sight of him would be the earnest of Heaven to me. Fy, fy upon us! that we have love lying rusting beside us, or, which is worse, wasting upon some loathsome objects, and that Christ should lie his lone.[5] Wo, wo is me! that sin hath made so many madmen, seeking the fool's paradise, fire under ice, and some good and desirable things, without, and apart from Christ. Christ, Christ, nothing but Christ, can cool our love's burning languor. O thirsty love! wilt thou set Christ, the well of life, to thy head, and drink thy fill. Drink, and spare not; drink love, and be drunken with Christ! Nay, alas! the distance betwixt us and Christ is a death. Oh, if[4] we were clasped in other's arms! We should never twin[6] again except Heaven twinned[7] and sundered us—and that cannot be.

I desire your children to seek this Lord. Desire them from me, to be requested, for Christ's sake, to be blessed and happy, and to come and take Christ, and all things with him. Let them beware

[1] Surety. [2] Disguised with paint. [3] Egress. [4] Oh, that.
[5] By himself alone. [6] Part. [7] Parted.

of glassy and slippery youth, of foolish young notions, of worldly lusts, of deceivable gain, of wicked company, of cursing, lying, blaspheming, and foolish talking: let them be filled with the Spirit, acquaint themselves with daily praying, and with the store-house of wisdom and comfort, the good word of God. Help the souls of the poor people; oh, that my Lord would bring me again among them, that I might tell unco[1] and great tales of Christ to them! Receive not a stranger to preach any other doctrine to them.

Pray for me, His prisoner of hope. I pray for you without ceasing. I write my blessing, earnest prayers, the love of God, and the sweet presence of Christ to you, and yours, and them.

Grace, grace, grace be with you.

Your lawful, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER LXXXIII.

TO THE EARL OF LOTHIAN.

Right Honorable, and my very Worthy, and Noble Lord,—Out of the honorable and good report that I hear of your Lordship's good-will and kindness, in taking to heart the honorable cause of Christ, and his afflicted church and wronged truth in this land, I make bold to speak a word, on paper, to your Lordship, at this distance, which I trust your Lordship will take in good part. It is your Lordship's honor and credit, to put-to your hand, (as ye do—all honor to God!) to the falling and tottering tabernacle of Christ, in this your mother-church, and to own Christ's wrongs as your own wrongs. O blessed hand, which shall wipe and dry the watery eyes of our weeping Lord, Jesus, now going mourning in sackcloth in his members, in his spouse, in his truth, and in the prerogative royal of his kingly power! He needeth not service and help from men; but it pleaseth his wisdom to make the wants and losses, the sores and wounds of his spouse a field and an office-house for the zeal of his servants to exercise themselves in; therefore, my noble and dear Lord, go on, go on in the strength of the Lord, against all opposition, to side with wronged Christ. The defending and warding of strokes off Christ's bride, the King's daughter, is like a piece of the rest of the way to Heaven, knotty, rough, stormy, and full of thorns. Many would follow Christ, but with a reservation that, by open proclamation, Christ would cry down crosses, and cry up fair weather, and a summer sky and sun, till we were all fairly landed at Heaven. I know that your Lordship hath not so learned Christ, but that ye intend to fetch Heaven, suppose that your father were standing in your way; and to take it with the wind on your face; for so both storm and wind were on the fair face of your lovely Fore-runner,

[1] Strange.

Christ, all his way. It is possible that the success answer not your desire, in this worthy cause: what then? Duties are ours, but events are the Lord's; and I hope, if your Lordship, and others with you, will go on to dive to the lowest ground and bottom of the knavery and perfidious treachery to Christ of the accursed, and wretched prelates, the Antichrist's first-born, and the first fruit of his foul womb, and shall deal with our Sovereign, (law going before you,) for the reasonable, and impartial hearing of Christ's bill of complaints, and set yourselves singly to seek the Lord and his face, that your righteousness shall break through the clouds which prejudice hath drawn over it, and that ye shall, in the strength of the Lord, bring our banished, and departing Lord Jesus home again to his sanctuary. Neither must your Lordship advise with flesh and blood in this; but wink, and in the dark reach your hand to Christ, and follow him. Let not men's fainting discourage you, neither be afraid of men's canny[1] wisdom, who, in this storm, take the nearest shore, and go to the lee and calm side of the Gospel, and hide Christ, if ever they had him, in their cabinets, as if they were ashamed of him, or, as if Christ were stolen wares, and would blush before the sun.

My very dear, and noble Lord, ye have rejoiced the hearts of many, that ye have made choice of Christ, and his Gospel, whereas such great temptations do stand in your way: but I love your profession the better, that it endureth winds. If we knew ourselves well, to want temptations is the greatest temptation of all. Neither is father nor mother, nor court, nor honor, in this overlustred world, with all its paintry[2] and farding,[3] anything else, when they are laid in the balance with Christ, but feathers, shadows, night-dreams, and straws. Oh, if this world knew the excellency, sweetness, and beauty of that high and lofty One, that Fairest among the sons of men, verily they would see that if their love were bigger than ten heavens, all in circles beyond each other, it were all too little for Christ, our Lord! I hope that your choice will not repent you, when life shall come to that twilight betwixt time and eternity, and ye shall see the utmost border of time, and shall draw the curtain, and look into eternity, and shall one day see God take the heavens in his hands, and fold them together like an old worn-out garment, and set on fire this clay part of the creation of God, and consume away, into smoke and ashes, the idol-hope of poor fools, who think that there is not a better country than this low country of dying clay. Children cannot make comparison aright betwixt this life and that which is to come; and, therefore, the babes of this world, who see no better, mould, in their own brain, a heaven of their own coining, because they see no further than the nearest side of time.

I dare lay in pawn my hope of Heaven, that this reproached way is the only way of peace. I find it is the way that the Lord hath sealed with his comforts, now in my bonds for Christ; and I

[1] Prudent. [2] Painted decorations. [3] Painted disguises.

verily esteem, and find chains and fetters for that lovely One, Christ, to be watered[1] over with sweet consolations, and the love-smiles of that lovely Bridegroom, for whose coming we wait. And when he cometh, then shall the blacks and whites of all men come before the sun; then shall the Lord put a final decision upon the pleas that Zion hath with her adversaries. And as fast as time posteth away, (which neither sitteth, nor standeth, nor sleepeth,) as fast is our hand-breadth of this short winter-night flying away, and the sky of our long-lasting day drawing near its breaking.

Except your Lordship be pleased to plead for me, against the tyranny of prelates, I shall be forgotten in this prison; for they did shape my doom according to their new, lawless canons, which is, that a deprived minister shall be utterly silenced, and not preach at all; which is a cruelty, contrary to their own former practices.

Now, the only wise God, the very God of peace, confirm, strengthen, and establish your Lordship upon the Stone laid in Zion, and be with you, forever.

Your Lordship's,

At all respectful obedience in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER LXXXIV.

TO JEAN BROWN.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I earnestly desire your on-going toward your country. I know that ye see your day melteth away by little and little, and that in a short time ye shall be put beyond time's bounds; for life is a post that standeth not still, and our joys here are born weeping, rather than laughing, and they die weeping. Sin, sin, this body of sin and corruption embittereth, and poisoneth all our enjoyments. Oh, that I were where I shall sin no more! Oh, to be freed of these chains and iron fetters, which we carry about with us! Lord, loose the sad prisoners. Who of the children of God have not cause to say, that they have their fill of this vain life, and like a full and sick stomach, to wish at mid-supper, that the supper were ended, and the table drawn, that the sick man might win[2] to bed, and enjoy rest? We have cause to tire at mid-supper, of the best messes that this world can dress up for us; and to cry to God, that he would remove the table, and put the sin-sick souls to rest with himself. Oh, for a long play-day with Christ, and our long-lasting vacance[3] of rest! Glad may their souls be that are safe over the firth,[4] Christ having

[1] Plated. [2] Get. [3] Vacation. [4] Frith, estuary.

paid the fraught.[1] Happy are they who have passed their hard and wearisome time of apprenticeship, and are now freemen and citizens in that joyful, high city, the New Jerusalem. Alas! that we should be glad of, and rejoice in our fetters, and our prison-house, and this dear inn, a life of sin, where we are absent from our Lord, and so far from our home. Oh, that we could get bonds and law-suretyship of our love, that it fasten not itself on these clay-dreams, these clay-shadows, and worldly vanities! We might be oftener seeing what they are doing in Heaven, and our hearts more frequently upon our sweet treasure above. We smell of the smoke of this lower house of the earth, because our hearts and our thoughts are here. If we could haunt up with God, we should smell of Heaven and of our country above, and we should look like our country, and like strangers or people not born or brought up hereaway.[2] Our crosses would not bite upon us[3] if we were heavenly-minded. I know of no obligation which the saints have to this world, seeing we fare but upon the smoke of it; and, if there be any smoke in the house, it bloweth upon our eyes. All our part of the table is scarce worth a drink of water; and, when we are stricken, we dare not weep, but steal our grief away betwixt our Lord and us, and content ourselves with stolen sorrow behind backs. God be thanked that we have many things that so stroke us against the hair, as we may pray, "God keep our better home, God bless our Father's house; and not this smoke, that bloweth us to seek our best lodging." I am sure that this is the best fruit of the cross, when we, from the hard fare of the dear inn, cry the more, that God would send a fair wind, to land us, hungered and oppressed strangers, at the door of our Father's house, which now is made in Christ our kindly heritage. Oh! then, let us pull up the stakes and stoups[4] of our tent, and take our tent on our back, and go with our flitting[5] to our best home; for here we have no continuing city.

I am waiting in hope here, to see what my Lord will do with me. Let him make of me what he pleaseth; providing he make glory to himself out of me, I care not. I hope, yea, I am now sure, that I am for Christ, and all that I can, or may make is for him. I am his everlasting debtor, or dyvour,[6] and still shall be; for, alas, I have nothing for him, and he getteth but little service of me! Pray for me, that our Lord would be pleased to give me house-room, that I may serve him in the calling which he hath called me unto.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

1 Freight. 2 In this present life.
3 Would not be able even to make the least mark with their teeth upon us.
4 Posts. 5 Furniture which may be removed from one residence to another.
6 Bankrupt.

LETTER LXXXV.

TO JOHN KENNEDY, BAILLIE OF AYR.

WORTHY, AND WELL-BELOVED BROTHER,—Grace, mercy and peace be unto you—I am yet waiting what our Lord will do for his afflicted Church, and for my re-entry to my Lord's house. Oh that I could hear the forfeiture of Christ, (now casten out of his inheritance,) recalled, and taken off by open proclamation; and that Christ were restored to be a free-holder and a landed heritor[1] in Scotland: and that the courts fenced[2] in the name of the bastard prelates, (their godfather the Pope's bailiffs and sheriffs) were cried down! Oh how sweet a sight were it, to see all the Tribes of the Lord in this land fetching home again our banished King, Christ, to his own palace, his sanctuary, and his throne! I shall think it mercy to my soul, if my faith will out-watch all this winter night, and not nod nor slumber till my Lord's summer-day dawn upon me. It is much if faith, and hope, in the sad nights of our heavy trial, escape with a whole skin, and without crack, or crook. I confess that unbelief hath not reason to be either father, or mother to it, (for unbelief is always an irrational thing;) but how can it be, but that such weak eyes as ours must cast water in a great smoke, or, that a weak head should not turn giddy when the water runneth deep, and strong? But God be thanked, that Christ, in his children, can endure a stress and a storm, howbeit soft nature would fall down in pieces.

Oh that I had that confidence as to rest on this, though he grind me into small powder, and bray me into dust, and scatter the dust to the four winds of heaven, that my Lord would gather up the powder, and make me up a new vessel again, to bear Christ's name to the world! I am sure that love, bottomed, and seated upon the faith of his love to me, would desire and endure this, and would even claim, and threep[3] kindness upon Christ's strokes, and kiss his love-glooms,[4] and both spell, and read salvation upon the wounds made by Christ's sweet hands. Oh that I had but a promise made from the mouth of Christ of his love to me! and then, howbeit my faith were as tender as paper, I think longing, and dwining,[5] and greening[6] of sick desires would cause it to bide[7] out the siege till the Lord came to fill the soul with his love; and I know, also, that, in that case, faith would bide[8] green and sappy at the root, even at mid-winter, and stand out against all storms. However it be, I know that Christ winneth Heaven in despite of Hell. But I owe as many praises and thanks to free grace, as would lye betwixt me and the utmost border of the highest Heaven, suppose ten thousand heavens were all laid above

[1] A proprietor of land.
[2] Constituted and opened.
[3] *To threep*, pertinaciously to persevere in asserting, in contradiction to denial.
[4] Love-frowns.
[5] Pining.
[6] Longing with greedy desire.
[7] Hold.
[8] Continue.

other. But oh! I have nothing that can hire, or bud[1] grace; for if grace would take hire it were no more grace; but all our stability, and the strength of our salvation is anchored and fastened upon free grace; and I am sure that Christ hath, by his death and blood, casten[2] the knot so fast, that the fingers of the devils, and hell-fuls of sins cannot loose it: and that bond of Christ, (that never yet was, nor ever shall, nor can be registrated,[3]) standeth surer than Heaven, or the days of Heaven, as that sweet pillar of the Covenant whereon we all hang. Christ, with all his little ones under his two wings, and in the compass or circle of his arms, is so sure, that cast him and them into the ground[4] of the sea, he shall come up again, and not lose one. An odd one cannot, nor shall be lost in the telling.

This was always God's aim, since Christ came into the play betwixt him and us, to make men dependent creatures, and, in the work of our salvation, to put created strength, and arms, and legs of clay quite out of play, and out of office and court; and now God hath substituted, in our room, and accepted his Son, the Mediator, for us, and all that we can make. If this had not been, I would have skinked over[5] and foregone my part of Paradise and salvation, for a breakfast of dead, moth-eaten earth; but now I would not give it, nor let it go, for more than I can tell;—and truly they are silly fools, and ignorant of Christ's worth, and so, full ill-trained and tutored, who tell Heaven and Christ over the board, for two feathers, or two straws of the Devil's painted pleasures, only lustred on the outer side. This is our happiness now, that our reckonings at night, when eternity shall come upon us, cannot be told: we shall be so far gainers, and so far from being super-expended, (as the poor fools of this world are, who give out their money, and get in but black hunger,) that angels cannot lay our counts, nor sum our advantage and incomes. Who knoweth how far it is to the bottom of our Christ's fulness, and to the ground[4] of our heaven? Who ever weighed Christ in a pair of balances? Who hath seen the foldings and plies, and the heights and depths of that glory which is in him, and kept for us? Oh for such a heaven as to stand afar off, and see, and love, and long for him, whill time's thread be cut, and this great work of creation dissolved, at the coming of our Lord!

Now to his grace I recommend you. I beseech you also, to pray for a re-entry to me into the Lord's house, if it be his good will.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Jan. 6, 1637.

[1] Bribe. [2] Tied. [3] Noted, protested. [4] Bottom.
[5] Formally renounced: an allusion to the practice of a seller's drinking the health of a purchaser, and wishing him luck in his bargain.

LETTER LXXXVI.

TO ELIZABETH KENNEDY.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I have long had a purpose of writing unto you, but I have been hindered. I heartily desire that ye would mind your country, and consider to what airth[1] your soul setteth its face; for all come not home at night, who suppose that they have set their face heavenward. It is a woful thing to die, and miss Heaven, and to lose house-room with Christ at night;—it is an evil journey where travellers are benighted in the fields. I persuade myself that thousands shall be deceived and ashamed of their hope: because they cast their anchor in sinking sands, they must lose it. Till now, I knew not the pain, labor, nor difficulty that there is to win at[2] home: nor did I understand so well, before this, what that meaneth, "The righteous shall scarcely be saved." Oh, how many a poor professor's candle is blown out, and never lighted again! I see that ordinary profession, and to be ranked amongst the children of God, and to have a name among men, is now thought good enough to carry professors to Heaven; but certainly a name is but a name, and will never bide[3] a blast of God's storm. I counsel you not to give your soul, or Christ rest, nor your eyes sleep, till ye have gotten something that will bide the fire, and stand out the storm. I am sure, that if my one foot were in Heaven, and, if then, he should say, "Fend[4] thyself, I will hold my grips[5] of thee no longer," I should go no farther, but presently fall down in as many pieces of dead nature.

They are happy for evermore who are over head and ears in the love of Christ, and know no sickness but love-sickness for Christ, and feel no pain but the pain of an absent, and hidden Well-beloved. We run our souls out of breath, and tire them in coursing and galloping after our night-dreams, (such are the rovings of our miscarrying hearts,) to get some created good thing in this life, and on this side of death. We would fain stay and spin out a heaven to ourselves, on this side of the water; but sorrow, want, changes, crosses, and sin are both woof and warp in that ill-spun web. Oh, how sweet and dear are these thoughts that are still upon the things which are above! and how happy are they who are longing to have little sand in their glass, and to have time's thread cut, and can cry to Christ, "Lord Jesus, have over:[6] come and fetch the dreary passenger!" I wish that our thoughts were more frequently than they are, upon our country. Oh, but Heaven casteth a sweet smell afar off, to those who have spiritual smelling! God hath made many fair flowers, but the fairest of them all is Heaven, and the flower of all flowers is

[1] Point of the compass. [2] Reach. [3] Endure.
[4] Shift for. [5] Keep hold. [6] Have done.

Christ. Oh! why do we not flee up to that lovely One? Alas, that there is such a scarcity of love, and of lovers of Christ amongst us all! Fy, fy upon us, who love fair things, as fair gold, fair houses, fair lands, fair pleasures, fair honors, and fair persons, and do not pine and melt away with love to Christ! Oh, would to God, I had more love for his sake! Oh, for as much as would lye betwixt me and Heaven, for his sake! Oh, for as much as would go round about the earth, and over the Heaven, yea, the Heaven of heavens, and ten thousand worlds, that I might let all out upon fair, fair, only fair Christ! But alas, I have nothing for him, yet he hath much for me. It is no gain to Christ, that he getteth my little feckless,[1] span-length, and hand-breadth of love. If men would have something to do with their hearts and their thoughts, that are always rolling up and down like men with oars in a boat, after sinful vanities, they might find great and sweet employment to their thoughts upon Christ. If those frothy, fluctuating, and restless hearts of ours would come all about Christ, and look into his love, to bottomless love, to the depth of mercy, to the unsearchable riches of his grace, to inquire after, and search into the beauty of God in Christ, they would be swallowed up in the depth and height, length and breadth of his goodness. Oh, if[2] men would draw the curtains, and look into the inner side of the ark, and behold how the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily! Oh! who would not say, "Let me die, let me die ten times, to see a sight of him?" Ten thousand deaths were no great price to give for him. I am sure that sick, fainting love would heighten the market, and raise the price to the double for him. But, alas, if men and angels were rouped,[3] and sold at the dearest price, they would not all buy a night's love, or a four-and-twenty-hours' sight of Christ. Oh, how happy are they who get Christ for nothing! God send me no more for my part of paradise than Christ;—and surely I were rich enough, and as well heavened as the best of them, if Christ were my heaven.

I can write no better thing to you, than to desire you, if ever ye laid Christ in a count, to take him up and count him again; and weigh him over again and again: and after this, have no other to court your love, and to woo your soul's delight, than Christ. He will be found worthy of all your love, howbeit it should swell upon you from the earth to the uppermost circle of the Heaven of heavens.

To our Lord Jesus, and his love, I commend you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

[1] Feeble, worthless. [2] Oh, that. [3] Sold by public auction.

LETTER LXXXVII.

TO JONET KENNEDY.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you—Ye are not a little obliged to His rich grace, who hath separated you for himself, and for the promised inheritance with the saints in light, from this condemned and guilty world. Hold fast Christ, contend for him: it is a lawful plea[1] to go to holding and drawing for Christ; and it is not possible to keep Christ peaceably, having once gotten him, except the Devil were dead. It must be your resolution to set your face against Satan's northern tempests and storms, for salvation:—nature would have heaven come to us while sleeping in our beds. We would all buy Christ, so being we might make price ourselves; but Christ is worth more blood and lives than either ye or I have to give him. When we shall come home, and enter to the possession of our Brother's fair Kingdom, and when our heads shall find the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to pains and sufferings, then shall we see life, and sorrow, to be less than one step or stride from a prison to glory; and that our little inch of time-suffering is not worthy of our first night's welcome-home to Heaven. Oh, what then will be the weight of every one of Christ's kisses! Oh, how weighty, and of what worth shall every one of Christ's love-smiles be! Oh, when once he shall thrust a wearied traveller's head betwixt his blessed breasts, the poor soul will think one kiss of Christ hath fully paid home forty, or fifty years' wet feet, and all its sore[2] hearts, and light sufferings, it had in following after Christ! Oh, thrice-blinded souls, whose hearts are charmed and bewitched with dreams, shadows, feckless[3] things, night-vanities, and night-fancies of a miserable life of sin! Shame on us, who sit still, fettered with the love and liking of the loan of a piece of dead clay! Oh, poor fools, who are beguiled with painted things, and this world's fair-weather, and smooth promises, and rotten worm-eaten hopes! May not the Devil laugh to see us give out our souls, and get in but corrupt and counterfeit pleasures of sin? Oh for a sight of eternity's glory, and a little tasting of the Lamb's marriage-supper! Half a draught, or a drop of the wine of consolation, that is up at our banqueting house, out of Christ's own hand, would make our stomachs loathe the brown bread, and the sour drink of a miserable life. Oh, how far are we bereaved of wit, to chase, and hunt, and run, till our souls be out of breath, after a condemned happiness of our own making! And do we not sit far in our own light, to make it a matter of bairns' play, to skink and drink over[4] paradise, and the heaven that Christ did sweat for, even for a blast

[1] Quarrel. [2] Aching. [3] Unsubstantial.
[4] *To skink and drink over*, formally and finally to renounce all claim to; in allusion to the practice of a seller's drinking the health of a purchaser, and wishing him luck of his bargain.

of smoke, and for Esau's morning breakfast? Oh that we were out of ourselves, and dead to this world, and this world dead and crucified to us! And, when we should be close[1] out of love and conceit of any masked and farded[2] lover whatsoever, then Christ would win and conquer to himself a lodging in the inmost yolk of our heart; then Christ should be our night-song, and our morning-song: then the very noise and din of our Well-beloved's feet, when he cometh, and his first knock or rap at the door should be as news of two heavens to us. Oh that our eyes and our soul's smelling should go after a blasted and sun-burnt flower, even this plastered, fair outsided[3] world; and then we have neither eye, nor smell for the Flower of Jesse, for that Plant of renown, for Christ, the choicest, the fairest, the sweetest Rose that ever God planted! Oh, let some of us die to smell the fragrance of him! and let my part of this rotten world be forfeited and sold for evermore, providing I may anchor my tottering soul upon Christ! I know that it is sometimes at this, "Lord, what wilt thou have for Christ?" But, O Lord, canst thou be budded, and propined[4] with any gift for Christ? O Lord, can Christ be sold? or rather, may not a poor needy sinner have him for nothing? If I can get no more, oh, let me be pained to all eternity, with longing for him! The joy of hungering for Christ should be my heaven for evermore. Alas, that I cannot draw souls and Christ together! But I desire the coming of his Kingdom, and that Christ, as I assuredly hope he will, would come upon withered Scotland, as rain upon the new-mown grass. Oh, let the King come! Oh, let his Kingdom come! Oh, let their eyes rot in their eye-holes,[5] who will not receive him home again to reign and rule in Scotland.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

TO A CHRISTIAN GENTLEWOMAN.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—Though not acquainted, yet at the desire of a Christian brother, I thought good to write a line unto you, entreating you, in the Lord Jesus, under your trials, to keep an ear open to Christ, who can speak for himself, howbeit your visitations, and your own sense should dream hard things of His love and favor. Our Lord never getteth so kind a look of us, nor our love in such a degree, nor our faith in such a measure of steadfastness, as he getteth out of the furnace of our tempting fears and sharp trials. I verily believe,

1 Altogether.
2 Painted.
3 Empty, hollow; having nothing but an outside.
4 Bribed and presented.
5 Zech xiv. 12.

(and too sad proofs in me say no less,) that if our Lord would grind our whorish lust into powder, the very old ashes of our corruption would take life again, and live, and hold us under so much bondage, that may humble us, and make us sad, till we be in that country where we shall need no physic at all. Oh, what violent means doth our Lord use to gain us to Him, as if, indeed, we were a prize worthy his fighting for! And be sure, if leading would do the turn, that he would not use pulling of the hair, and drawing: but the best of us would bide[1] a strong pull of our Lord's right arm ere we follow Him. Yet I say not this as if our Lord always measured afflictions by so many ounce-weights, answerable to the grain-weights of our guiltiness: I know that He doth in many, (and possibly in you,) seek nothing so much as faith, that can endure summer and winter in their extremity. Oh, how precious to the Lord are faith and love, that when threshed, beaten, and chased away, and boasted,[2] (as it were,) by God himself, doth yet look warm-like, love-like, kind-like, and life-like, home-over[3] to Christ, and would be in at him, ill and well as it may be!

Think it not much, that your husband, or the nearest to you in the world, proveth to have the bowels and mercy of the ostrich, hard, and rigorous, and cruel: for, (Psalm xxvii. 10,) the Lord taketh up such fallen ones as these. I could not wish a sweeter life, or more satisfying expressions of kindness, till I be up at that Prince of kindness, than the Lord's saints find, when the Lord taketh up men's refuse, and lodgeth this world's outlaws, whom no man seeketh after. His breath is never so hot, His love casteth never such a flame, as when this world, and those who should be the helpers of our joy, cast water on our coal. It is a sweet thing to see them cast out, and God take in; and to see them throw us away, as the refuse of men, and God take us up as His jewels and His treasure. Often He maketh gold of dross, as once He made the cast-away Stone, the Stone rejected by the builders, the Head of the corner. The princes of this world would not have our Lord Jesus as a pinning[4] in the wall, or to have any place in the building; but the Lord made Him the Master-stone of power and of place. God be thanked, that this world has not power to cry us down so many pounds, as rulers cry down light gold, or light silver: we shall stand for as much as our Master-coiner, Christ, whose coin, arms, and stamp we bear, will have us—Christ hath no miscarrying balance. Thank your Lord, who chaseth your love through two kingdoms, and followeth you and it over sea, to have you for himself, as he speaketh, (Hos. iii.) For God layeth up his saints, as the wale and the choice[5] of all the world for himself; and this is like Christ and His love. Oh, what in Heaven, or out of Heaven, is comparable to the smell of Christ's garments! Nay, suppose that our Lord would manifest His art, and make ten thousand heavens of good and glorious things, and

[1] Stand. [2] Threatened with looks or gestures. [3] Homewards.
[4] A small stone used in building to fill up the interstices between larger stones.
[5] The very best selection that could be made.

of new joys, devised out of the deep of infinite wisdom, He could not make the like of Christ; for Christ is God, and God cannot be made: and, therefore, let us hold us with Christ, howbeit we might have our wale and will[1] of a host of lovers, as many as three heavens could contain. Oh, that He and we were together! Oh, when Christ and ye shall meet about the utmost march,[2] and borders of time, and the entry into eternity, ye shall see heaven in his face at the first look, and salvation and glory sitting in his countenance, and betwixt his eyes. Faint not; the miles to Heaven are but few and short; he is making a green bed (as the word speaketh, Cant. i.,) of love for himself and you. There are many heads lying in Christ's bosom, but there is room for yours amongst the rest; and, therefore, go on, and let hope go before you. Sin not in your trials, and the victory is yours. Pray, wrestle, and believe, and ye shall overcome and prevail with God, as Jacob did. No windlestraws,[3] no bits of clay, no temptations, which are of no longer life than an hour, will then be able to withstand you, when once ye have prevailed with God.

Help me with your prayers, that it would please the Lord to give me house room again, to speak of His righteousness in the great congregation, if it may seem good in His sight.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 6, 1637.

LETTER LXXXIX.

TO MY LORD CRAIGHALL.

My Lord,—I received Mr. L.'s letter with your Lordship's, and his learned thoughts in the matter of ceremonies. I owe respect to the man's learning, for that I hear him to be opposed to Arminian heresies: but, (with reverence of that worthy man,) I wonder to hear such popish-like expressions as he hath in his letter, as "Your Lordship may spare doubtings, when the King and Church have agreed in the settling of such orders; and the Church's direction in things indifferent and circumstantial, (as if indifferent and circumstantial were all one,) should be the rule of every private Christian." I only viewed the papers two hours' space, the bearer hastening me to write. I find the worthy man not so seen[4] in this controversy, as some turbulent men of our country, whom he calleth refusers of conformity: and let me say it, I am more confirmed in nonconformity, when I see such a great wit play the agent so slenderly; but I will lay the blame on the

1 Free and ample liberty of choice. 2 Boundary.
3 Withered stalks of grass; metaphorically, weak and worthless things.
4 Versant, skilled.

weakness of the cause, not on the meanness of Mr. L.'s learning. I have been, and still am confident, that Britain cannot answer one argument *a scandalo:* and I longed much to hear Mr. L. speak to the cause: and I would say, if some ordinary divine had answered as Mr. L. doth, that he understood not the nature of a Scandal; but I dare not vilify that worthy man so. I am now upon the heat of some other employment. I shall, (but God willing,) answer this, to the satisfying of any not prejudiced.

I will not say that every one is acquainted with the reason, in my letter, from God's presence and bright shining face, in suffering for this cause. Aristotle never knew the medium of the conclusion: and Christ saith few know it (see Rev. ii. 17.) I am sure that conscience standing in awe of the Almighty, and fearing to make a little hole in the bottom for fear of under-water, is a strong medium to hold off an erroneous conclusion in the least wing or lith[1] of sweet, sweet truth, that concerneth the royal prerogative of our kingly and highest Lord Jesus; and my witness is in Heaven, that I saw neither pleasure, nor profit, nor honor, to hook me, or catch me, in entering into prison for Christ; but the wind on my face for the present; and if I had loved to sleep in a whole skin, with the ease and present delight that I saw on this side of sun and moon, I should have lived at ease, and in good hopes to fare as well as others. The Lord knoweth that I preferred preaching of Christ, and still do, to anything next to Christ himself. And their new canons took my one, my only joy, from me, which was to me as the poor man's one eye, that had no moe; and, alas! there is little lodging in their hearts for pity or mercy, to pluck out a poor man's one eye for a thing indifferent; *id est*, for knots of straw, and things, (as they mean,) off the way to Heaven. I desire not that my name take journey, and go a pilgrim to Cambridge, for fear I come into the ears of authority—I am sufficiently burnt already.

In the mean time, be pleased to try if the Bishop of St. Andrew's, and Glasgow, (Galloway's Ordinary,) will be pleased to abate from the heat of their wrath, and let me go to my charge. Few know the heart of a prisoner; yet I hope that the Lord will hew his own glory out of as knotty timber as I am. Keep Christ, my dear and worthy Lord. Pretended paper-arguments from angering the Mother-church, that can reel, and nod, and stagger, are not of such weight as peace with the Father, and Husband. Let the wife gloom,[2] I care not, if the Husband laugh.

Remember my service to my Lord your father, and mother, and your lady. Grace be with you.

Yours, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, Jan. 24, 1637.

[1] Joint.

[2] Knit her brows.

LETTER XC.

TO JOHN KENNEDY.

My Loving, and most Affectionate Brother in Christ, —I salute you with grace, mercy and peace from God, our Father, and from our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I promised to write to you, and although late enough, yet I now make it good. I heard with grief of your great danger of perishing by the sea, and of your merciful deliverance with joy. Sure I am, brother, that Satan will leave no stone unrolled, as the proverb is, to roll you off your Rock, or at least to shake and unsettle you: for, at that same time, the mouths of wicked men were opened in hard speeches against you, by land, and the Prince of the power of the air was angry with you, by sea. See then how much ye are obliged to that malicious Murderer, who would beat you with two rods at one time; but, blessed be God! his arm is short; if the sea and winds would have obeyed him, ye had never come to land. Thank your God, who saith, (Rev. i. 18,) "I have the keys of Hell, and of death;" (Deut. xxxii. 39,) "I kill and I make alive;" (1 Sam. ii. 6,) "The Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." If Satan were jailer, and had the keys of death and of the grave, they should be stored with moe prisoners. Ye were knocking at these black gates, and ye found the doors shut; and we do all welcome you back again.

I trust that ye know it is not for nothing that ye are sent to us again. The Lord knew, that ye had forgotten something that was necessary for your journey; that your armor was not as yet thick enough against the stroke of death. Now, in the strength of Jesus dispatch your business; that debt is not forgiven, but fristed:[1] death hath not bidden you farewell, but hath only left you for a short season. End your journey, ere the night come upon you: have all in readiness against the time that ye must sail through that black and impetuous Jordan; and Jesus, Jesus, who knoweth both those depths and the rocks, and all the coasts, be your pilot. The last tide will not wait for you one moment: if ye forget anything, when your sea is full, and your foot in that ship, there is no returning again to fetch it. What ye do amiss in your life to-day, ye may amend it to-morrow: for as many suns as God maketh to arise upon you, ye have as many new lives; but ye can die but once, and if ye mar or spill[2] that business, ye cannot come back to mend that piece of work again. No man sinneth twice in dying ill; as we die but once, so we die but ill or well once. Ye see how the number of your months is written in God's book; and as one of the Lord's hirelings, ye must work till the shadow of the evening come upon you, and ye shall run your glass even to the last pickle[3] of sand. Fulfil your course

[1] Credited. [2] Spoil. [3] Grain.

with joy; for we take nothing to the grave with us, but a good or evil conscience. And, although the sky clear after this storm, yet clouds will engender another.

Ye contracted with Christ, I hope, when first ye began to follow him, that ye would bear his cross. Fulfil your part of the contract with patience, and break not to Jesus Christ. Be honest, brother, in your bargaining with him: for who knoweth better how to bring up children than our God? For, (to lay aside his knowledge, of the which there is no finding out,) he hath been practised in bringing up his heirs these five thousand years, and his bairns are all well brought up, and many of them are honest men now at home, up in their own house in Heaven, and are entered heirs to their Father's inheritance. Now, the form of his bringing-up was by chastisements, scourging, correcting, nurturing: and see if he maketh exception of any of his bairns, (Rev. iii. 19; Heb. xii. 7, 8.) No: his eldest Son, and his Heir, Jesus, is not excepted, (Heb. ii. 10.) Suffer we must: ere we were born, God decreed it; and it is easier to complain of his decree, than to change it. It is true, terrors of conscience cast us down; and yet without terrors of conscience we cannot be raised up again; fears and doubtings shake us; and yet without fears and doubtings we would soon sleep, and lose our grips of Christ: tribulation and temptations will almost loosen us at the root; and yet, without tribulations and temptations, we can now no more grow, than herbs or corn without rain. Sin and Satan, and the world, will say, and cry in our ears, that we have a hard reckoning to make in judgment; and yet none of these three, except they lie, dare say in our face, that our sin can change the tenor of the New Covenant. Forward then, dear brother, and lose not your grips. Hold fast the truth; for the world, sell not one dram-weight of God's truth, especially now, when most men measure truth by time, like young seamen setting their compass by a cloud: for now Time is father and mother to Truth, in the thoughts and practices of our evil time. The God of truth establish us; for, alas! now there are none to comfort the prisoners of hope, and the mourners in Zion. We can do little, except pray and mourn for Joseph in the stocks. And let their tongue cleave to the roof of their mouth who forget Jerusalem now in her day: and the Lord remember Edom, and render to him as he hath done to us.

Now, brother, I shall not weary you; but I entreat you to remember my dearest love to Mr. David Dickson, with whom I have small acquaintance; yet, I bless the Lord, I know that he both prayeth and doeth for our dying Kirk. Remember my dearest love to John Stuart, whom I love in Christ; and show him from me, that I do always remember him, and hope for a meeting. The Lord, Jesus, establish him more and more, though he be already a strong man in Christ. Remember my heartiest affection in Christ to William Rodger, whom I also remember to God. I wish that the first news I hear of him, and you, and all that love our common Saviour, in those bounds, may be, that they are so knit

and linked, and kindly fastened in love with the Son of God, that ye may say, "Now if we would ever so fain escape out of Christ's hands, yet love hath so bound us, that we cannot get our hands free again; he hath so ravished our hearts, that there is no loosening of his grips; the chains of his soul-ravishing love are so strong, that the grave nor death will break them." I hope, brother, yea, I doubt not of it, that ye lay me, and my first entry to the Lord's vineyard, and my flock, before Him who hath put me into his work; as the Lord knoweth, since first I saw you, I have been mindful of you. Marion Macknaught doth remember most heartily her love to you, and to John Stuart. Blessed be the Lord! that in God's mercy, I found in this country such a woman, to whom Jesus is dearer than her own heart, when there be so many that cast Christ over their shoulder. Good brother, call to mind the memory of your worthy father, now asleep in Christ; and, as his custom was, pray continually, and wrestle for the life of a dying breathless kirk: and desire John Stuart not to forget poor Zion,—she hath few friends, and few to speak one good word for her.

Now I commend you, your whole soul, and body and spirit, to Jesus Christ and his keeping, hoping that ye will live and die, stand and fall, with the cause of our Master, Jesus. The Lord Jesus himself be with your spirit.

Your loving brother in our Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, Feb. 2, 1637.

LETTER XCI.

TO MY WELL-BELOVED, AND REVEREND BROTHER, MR. ROBERT BLAIR.

REVEREND, AND DEARLY-BELOVED BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be unto you.

It is no great wonder, my dear brother, that ye be in heaviness for a season, and that God's will, in crossing your design and desires to dwell amongst a people whose God is the Lord, should move you. I deny not that ye have cause to inquire what his providence speaketh in this to you; but God's directing and commanding will can, by no good logic, be concluded from events of providence. The Lord sent Paul on many errands for the spreading of his Gospel, where he found lions in his way. A promise was made to his people of the Holy Land, and yet many nations were in the way, fighting against, and ready to kill them who had the promise, or to keep them from possessing that good land which the Lord their God had given them. I know that ye have most to do with submission of spirit; but I persuade myself that ye have learned, in every condition wherein ye are cast, therein to be content, and to say "Good is the will of the Lord, let it be done."

I believe that the Lord tackleth[1] his ship often to fetch the wind, and that he purposeth to bring mercy out of your sufferings and silence, which, (I know from mine own experience,) is grievous to you. Seeing that he knoweth our willing mind to serve him, our wages and stipend is running to the fore[2] with our God, even as some sick soldiers get pay when they are bedfast, and not able to go to the field with others. "Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength," (Isa. xlix. 5.) And we are to believe it shall be thus ere all the play be played. (Jer. li. 35,) "The violence done to me and my flesh be upon Babylon," and the Great Whore's lovers, "shall the inhabitants of Zion say; and my blood be upon Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say." And, (Zech. xii. 2,) "Behold I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling to all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem;" (ver. 3,) "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; they that burden themselves with it shall be broken in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it." When they have eaten and swallowed us up, they shall be sick, and vomit us out living men again:—the Devil's stomach cannot digest the Church of God. Suffering is the other half of our ministry, howbeit the hardest: for we would be content that our King, Jesus, should make an open proclamation, and cry down crosses, and cry up joy, gladness, ease, honor, and peace; but it must not be so; through many afflictions we must enter into the Kingdom of God. Not only by them, but through them must we go; and wiles will not take us past the cross:—it is folly to think to steal to Heaven with a whole skin.

For myself, I am here a prisoner confined in Aberdeen, threatened to be removed to Caithness, because I desire to edify in this town: and am openly preached against in the pulpits in my hearing, and tempted with disputations by the doctors, especially by D. B. Yet I am not ashamed of the garland and crown of my Lord Jesus. I would not exchange my weeping with the painted laughter of the Fourteen Prelates. At my first coming here I took the dorts[3] at Christ, and would, forsooth, summon him for unkindness. I sought a plea[4] of my Lord, and was tossed with challenges[5] whether he loved me or not; and disputed over again all that he had done to me, because his word was a fire shut up in my bowels and I was weary with forbearing, because I said I was cast out of the Lord's inheritance; but now I see that I was a fool. My Lord miskent[6] all, and did bear with my foolish jealousies, and miskent[6] that ever I wronged his love; and now he is come again with mercy under his wings. I passed from my (oh, thoughtless!) summons: he is God, I see, and I am man. Now it hath pleased him to renew his love to my soul, and to dawt[7] his poor prisoner. Therefore, dear brother, help me to praise; and

[1] Tacketh. [2] To account. [3] Pet. [4] Quarrel.
[5] Questionings. [6] Would not know. [7] Fondle.

show the Lord's people with you what he hath done to my soul, that they may pray and praise; and I charge you, in the name of Christ, not to omit it: for this cause I write to you, that my sufferings may glorify my royal King, and edify his church in Ireland. He knoweth how one of Christ's love-coals hath burnt my soul with a desire to have my bonds to preach his glory, whose cross I now bear. God forgive you if you do it not; but I hope the Lord will move your heart, to proclaim in my behalf the sweetness, excellency, and glory of my royal King. It is but our soft flesh that hath raised a slander on the cross of Christ: I see now the white side of it; my Lord's chains are all over-gilded. Oh, if[1] Scotland and Ireland had part of my feast! And yet I get not my meat but with many strokes. There are none here to whom I can speak: I dwell in Kedar's tents. Refresh me with a letter from you. Few know what is betwixt Christ and me.

Dear brother, upon my salvation, this is his truth that we suffer for. Christ would not seal a blank charter to souls. Courage, courage, joy, joy for evermore! Oh joy unspeakable and glorious! Oh for help to set my crowned King on high! Oh for love to Him who is altogether lovely! that love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown!

I remember you, and bear your name on my breast to Christ. I beseech you forget not his afflicted prisoner. Grace, mercy, and peace be with you. Salute, in the Lord, from me, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Livingston, Mr. Ridge, Mr. Colwart, &c.

Your brother, and fellow-prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 7, 1637.

LETTER XCII.

TO HIS REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, MR. JOHN LIVINGSTON

My Reverend and Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, a peace be to you—I long to hear from you, and to be refreshed w the comforts of the bride of our Lord Jesus in Ireland. I su with you in grief for the dash that your desires to be at N. E. ha received of late; but if our Lord, who hath skill to bring up l children, had not seen it your best, it would not have befallen y Hold your peace, and stay yourself upon the Holy One of Isra Hearken to what He hath said in crossing of your desires, He w speak peace to His people.

I am here removed from my flock, and silenced, and confined in Aberdeen, for the testimony of Jesus; and I have been confined in spirit also with desertions and challenges.[2] I gave in a bill of quarrels, and complaints of unkindness against Christ, who seemed to have cast me over the dyke[3] of the vineyard, as a dry tree, and separated me from the Lord's inheritance: but high, high and

[1] Oh, that. [2] Accusations. [3] Wall.

loud praises be to our royal crowned King in Zion, that He hath not burnt the dry branch—I shall yet live, and see His glory.

Your Mother-church, for her whoredom, is like to be cast off. The bairns may break their hearts, to see such chiding betwixt the husband and the wife. Our clergy is upon a reconciliation with the Lutherans, and the doctors are writing books, and drawing up a Common Confession at the Council's command. Our Service-book[1] is proclaimed with sound of trumpet. The night is fallen down upon the prophets; Scotland's day of visitation is come: it is time for the bride to weep, while Christ is a-saying that He will choose another wife. But our sky will clear again. The dry branch of cut-down Lebanon will bud again and be glorious, and they shall yet plant vines upon our mountains.

Now, my dear brother, I write to you for this end, that ye may help me to praise, and seek help of others with you, that God be glorified in my bonds. My Lord Jesus hath taken the withered dry stranger, and His prisoner broken in heart, into His house-of-wine. Oh! if[2] ye, and all Scotland, and all our brethren with you, knew how I am feasted! Christ's honeycombs drop comforts. He dineth with His prisoner, and the King's spikenard casteth a smell. The Devil cannot get it denied that we suffer for the apple of Christ's eye, His royal prerogatives as King and Law-giver. Let us not fear or faint. He will have His Gospel once again rouped[3] in Scotland, and have the matter going to voices, to see who will say, "Let Christ be crowned King in Scotland." It is true that Antichrist stirreth his tail; but I love a rumbling or raging devil in the Kirk, (since the Church militant cannot or may not want a devil to trouble her,) rather than a subtile or sleeping devil. Christ never yet got a bride without stroke of sword. It is now nigh the Bridegroom's entering into His chamber, let us awake and go in with Him.

I bear your name to Christ's door; I pray you, dear brother, forget me not. Let me hear from you by letter, and I charge you, smother not Christ's bounty towards me. I write what I have found of Him in the house of my pilgrimage. Remember my love to all our brethren and sisters there.

The Keeper of the vineyard watch for His besieged city, and for you.

Your brother, and fellow-sufferer, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 7, 1637.

LETTER XCIII.

TO MR. EPHRAIM MELVIN.

REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER,—I received your letter, and am contented, with all my heart, that our acquaintance in our Lord continue.

[1] Book of Common Prayer. [2] Oh that. [3] Put up to sale by auction.

I am wrestling, as I dow,[1] up the mount with Christ's cross: my Second is kind, and able to help.

As for your questions, because of my manifold distractions, and letters to multitudes, I have not time to answer them. What shall be said, in common for that, shall be imparted to you: for I am upon these questions: therefore, spare me a little, for the Service-book[2] would take a great time. But I think, Sicut deosculatio religiosa imaginis, aut etiam elementorum, est in se idololatria externa, etsi intentio deosculandi, tota, quanta in actu est, feratur in Deum πρωτοτυπὸν; ita, geniculatio coram pane, quando, nempe, ex instituto, totus homo externus et internus versari debeat circa elementaria signa, est adoratio relativa, et adoratio ipsius panis. Ratio: Intentio adorandi objectum materiale, non est de essentiâ externæ adorationis, ut patet in desoculatione religiosâ. Sic geniculatio coram imagine Babylonicâ est externa adoratio imaginis, etsi tres pueri mente intendissent adorare Jehovam. Sic, qui ex metu solo, aut spe pretii, aut inanis gloriæ, geniculatur coram aureo vitulo Jeroboami, (quod ab ipso rege, qui nullâ religione inductus, sed libidine dominandi tantum, vitulum erexit, factitatum esse, textus satis luculenter clamat,) adorat vitulum externâ adoratione; esto quod putaret vitulum esse meram creaturam, et honore nullo dignum: quia geniculatio, sive nos nolumus, sive volumus, ex instituto Dei et naturæ, in actu religioso, est symbolum religiosæ adorationis: ergo, sicut panis significat corpus Christi, etsi absit actus omnis nostræ intentionis; sic religiosa geniculatio, sublatâ omni intentione humanâ, est externa adoratio panis, coram quo adoramus, ut coram signo vicario et repræsentativo Dei.

Thus recommending you to God's tender mercy, I desire that ye would remember me to God. Sanctification will settle you most in the truth.

Grace be with you.

Your brother in Christ Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER XCIV.

TO ROBERT GORDON, OF KNOCKBREX.

My very Worthy, and Dear Friend,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—Though all Galloway should have forgotten me, I would have expected a letter from you ere now:—but I will not expound it to be forgetfulness of me.

Now, my dear brother, I cannot show you how matters go betwixt Christ and me. I find my Lord going and coming seven times a-day. His visits are short; but they are both frequent and sweet. I dare not for my life think of a challenge of my Lord.

[1] Am able. [2] Book of Common Prayer.

I hear ill tales, and hard reports of Christ, from the Tempter, and my flesh: but love believeth no evil. I may swear that they are liars, and that apprehensions make lies of Christ's honest and unalterable love to me. I dare not say that I am a dry tree, or that I have no room at all in the vineyard: but yet I often think that the sparrows are blessed, who may resort to the House of God in Anwoth, from which I am banished.

Temptations, that I supposed to be stricken dead, and laid upon their back, rise again, and revive upon me; yea, I see that, while I live, temptations will not die. The Devil seemeth to brag and boast as much, as if he had more court with Christ than I have; and as if he had charmed and blasted my ministry, that I shall do no more good in public: but this wind shaketh no corn.[1] I will not believe that Christ would have made such a mint[2] to have me to himself, and have taken so much pains upon me as He hath done, and then slip away so easily from possession, and lose the glory of what He hath done. Nay, since I came to Aberdeen, I have been taken up to see the New Land, the fair palace of the Lamb: and, will Christ let me see Heaven, to break my heart, and never give it to me? I shall not think my Lord Jesus giveth a dumb earnest, or putteth His seals to blank paper, or intendeth to put me off with fair and false promises.

I see that now, which I never saw well before.—1. I see faith's necessity in a fair day is never known aright; but now I miss nothing so much as faith. Hunger in me runneth to fair and sweet promises; but, when I come, I am like a hungry man that wanteth teeth, or a weak stomach having a sharp appetite that is filled with the very sight of meat, or like one stupified with cold under the water, that would fain come to land, but cannot grip[3] anything casten[4] to him. I can let Christ grip me, but I cannot grip him. I love to be kissed and sit on Christ's knee; but I cannot set my feet to the ground, for afflictions bring the cramp upon my faith. All that I dow[5] do is to hold out a lame faith to Christ, like a beggar holding out a stump, instead of an arm, or leg, and crying, "Lord Jesus work a miracle!" Oh, what would I give to have hands and arms, to grip[3] strongly, and fold heartsomely,[6] about Christ's neck, and to have my claim made good with real possession! I think that my love to Christ hath feet in abundance, and runneth swiftly to be at him, but it wanteth hands and fingers to apprehend him. I think that I would give Christ every morning my blessing, to have as much faith as I have love and hunger; at least, I miss faith more than love or hunger.

2. I see that mortification, and to be crucified to the world, is not so highly accounted of by us as it should be. Oh, how heavenly a thing it is to be dead, and dumb, and deaf to this world's sweet music! I confess it hath pleased his Majesty to make me

[1] A proverbial expression, intimating that his efforts avail nothing.
[2] Intimation, by word or signs, of an intention.
[3] Lay hold of.
[4] Thrown.
[5] Am able to.
[6] Cordially.

laugh at children, who are wooing this world for their match. I see men lying about the world, as nobles about a king's court; and I wonder what they are all doing there. As I am at this present I would scorn to court such a feckless[1] and petty princess, or buy this world's kindness with a bow of my knee. I scarce now either hear or see what it is that this world offereth me; I know that it is little which it can take from me, and as little that it can give me. I recommend mortification to you above anything; for, alas! we but chase feathers flying in the air, and tire our own spirits for the froth and over-gilded clay of a dying life. One sight of what my Lord hath let me see within this short time, is worth a world of worlds.

3. I thought courage in the time of trouble for Christ's sake, a thing that I might take up at my foot; I thought that the very remembrance of the honesty of the cause would be enough; but I was a fool in so thinking. I have much ado now to win to[2] one smile. But I see that joy groweth up in Heaven, and it is above our short arm. Christ will be steward and dispenser himself, and none else but he; therefore, now, I count much of one drachm-weight of spiritual joy. One smile of Christ's face is now to me as a kingdom, and yet he is no niggard to me of comforts. Truly I have no cause to say that I am pinched with penury, or that the consolations of Christ are dried up: for he hath poured down rivers upon a dry wilderness, the like of me, to my admiration: and in my very swoonings, he holdeth up my head, and stayeth me with flagons of wine, and comforteth me with apples. My house and bed are strewed with kisses of love. Praise, praise with me. Oh, if ye and I betwixt us could lift up Christ upon his throne, howbeit all Scotland should cast him down to the ground!

My brother's case toucheth me near. I hope that ye will be kind to him, and give him your best counsel.

Remember my love to your brother, to your wife, and G. M. Desire him to be faithful, and to repent of his hypocrisy; and say that I wrote it to you. I wish him salvation. Write to me your mind anent C. E., and C. Y., and their wives, and I. G., or any others in my parish. I fear that I am forgotten amongst them; but I cannot forget them.

The prisoner's prayers and blessings come upon you. Grace, grace be with you.

Your brother, in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 9, 1637.

[1] Worthless. [2] To attain to.

LETTER XCV.

TO THE HONORABLE, AND TRULY NOBLE LADY, THE VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Ladyship—I long to hear from you. I am here waiting, if a good wind, long-looked-for, will at length blow into Christ's sails, in this land. But I wonder if Jesus be not content to suffer more yet in his members and cause, and in the beauty of his house, rather than he should not be avenged upon this land. I hear that many worthy men, (who see more in the Lord's dealings, than I can take up with my dim sight,) are of a contrary mind, and do believe that the Lord is coming home again, to his House in Scotland. I hope he is on his journey that way; yet I look not but that he will feed this land with their own blood, before he establish his throne amongst us. I know that your Honor is not looking after things hereaway.[1] Ye have no great cause to think that your stock and principal is under the roof of these visible heavens; and I hope that ye would think yourself a beguiled and cozened soul if it were so. I should be sorry to counsel your Ladyship, to make a covenant with time, and this life; but rather desire you to hold in fair generals, and afar off from this ill-founded heaven, that is on this side of the water. It speaketh somewhat, when our Lord bloweth the bloom[2] off our daft[3] hopes in this life, and loppeth the branches off our worldly joys, well nigh the root, on purpose that they should not thrive. Lord spill[4] my fool's heaven in this life, that I may be saved forever. A forfeiture of the saint's part of the yolk and marrow of short-laughing worldly happiness, is not such a real evil as our blinded eyes conceive.

I am thinking long[5] now for some deliverance more than before. But I know that I am in an error. It is possible I am not come to that measure of trial which the Lord is seeking in his work. If my friends in Galloway would effectually do[6] for my deliverance, I should exceedingly rejoice; but I know not but the Lord hath a way, whereof he will be the only reaper of praises.

Let me know with the bearer how the child is. The Lord be his tutor, and your only comforter. There is nothing here where I am, but profanity, and atheism. Grace, grace be with your Ladyship,

Your Ladyship's, at all obliged obedience, in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 13, 1637.

[1] In this present state.
[2] Blossom.
[3] Insane, foolish.
[4] Spoil, ruin.
[5] Longing.
[6] Exert themselves.

LETTER XCVI.

TO THE NOBLE, AND CHRISTIAN LADY, THE VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—I would not omit the occasion to write to your Ladyship with the bearer. I am glad that the child is well. God's favor, even in the eyes of men, be seen upon him!

I hope that your Ladyship is thinking upon these sad and woful days wherein we now live; when our Lord, in his righteous judgment, is sending the Kirk the gate[1] she is going, to Rome's brothel-house, to seek a lover of her own, seeing that she hath given up with Christ her husband. Oh, what sweet comfort, what rich salvation, are laid up for those who had rather wash and roll their garments in their own blood, than break out from Christ by apostasy! Keep yourself in the love of Christ, and stand far aback from the pollutions of the world. Side not with these times, and hold off from coming nigh the signs of a conspiracy with those that are now come out against Christ, that ye may be one kept for Christ only. I know that your Ladyship thinketh upon this, and how you may be humbled for yourself, and this backsliding land; for I avouch, that wrath from the Lord is gone out against Scotland. I think aye the longer the better of my royal and worthy Master. He is become a new Well-beloved to me now, in renewed consolations, by the presence of the Spirit of grace and glory. Christ's garments smell of the powder of the merchant, when he cometh out of his ivory chambers. Oh, his perfumed face, his fair face, his lovely and kindly kisses, have made me, a poor prisoner, see, that there is more to be had of Christ in this life than I had believed! We think all is but a little earnest, a four-hours',[2] a small tasting, which we have, or that is to be had in this life, (which is true compared with the inheritance;) but yet I know it is more, it is the Kingdom of God within us. Wo, wo is me, that I have not ten loves for that one Lord Jesus; and that love faileth, and drieth up in loving him; and that I find no way to spend my love desires, and the yolk of my heart upon that fairest and dearest One. I am far behind with my narrow heart. Oh, how ebb[3] a soul have I to take in Christ's love! for, let worlds be multiplied, according to angels' understanding, in millions, whill[4] they weary themselves, these worlds would not contain the thousandth part of his love. Oh, if[5] I could yoke in[6] amongst the thick[7] of angels, and seraphims, and now glorified saints, and could raise a new love-song of Christ, before all the world!—I am pained with wondering at new-opened treasures in Christ. If every finger, member, bone,

[1] Road. [2] A slight afternoon refreshment. [3] Shallow. [4] Till.
[5] Oh, that. [6] *To yoke in*, to join in with energy. [7] Throng.

and joint, were a torch burning in the hottest fire in Hell, I would that they could all send out love praises, high songs of praise, for evermore, to that Plant of Renown, to that royal and high Prince, Jesus my Lord. But alas! his love swelleth in me and findeth no vent. Alas! what can a dumb prisoner do, or say for him! Oh, for an ingine[1] to write a book of Christ and his love! Nay, I am left of him bound, and chained with his love. I cannot find a loosed soul to lift up his praises and give them out to others. But, oh! my day-light hath thick clouds; I cannot shine in his praises. I am often like a ship plying about to seek the wind: I sail at great leisure, and cannot be blown upon that loveliest Lord. Oh, if[2] I could turn my sails to Christ's right airth:[3] and that I had my heart's wishes of his love! But, I but mar his praises: nay, I know no comparison of what Christ is, and what his worth is; all the angels, and all the glorified, praise him not so much as in halves—who can advance him, or utter all his praises? I want nothing: unknown faces favor me: enemies must speak good of the truth: my Master's cause purchaseth commendations.

The hopes of my enlargement, from appearances, are cold. My faith hath no bed to sleep upon but omnipotency. The good-will of the Lord, and his sweetest presence, be with you and that child. Grace, and peace, be yours.

Your Ladyship's, in all duty in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER XCVII.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND CHRISTIAN LADY, THE VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace, be to your Ladyship—I would not omit to write a line with this Christian bearer, one in your Ladyship's own case, driven near to Christ, in, and by her affliction. I wish that my friends in Galloway forget me not. However it be, Christ is so good that I will have no other tutor, suppose I could have wale[4] and choice of ten thousand beside. I think now, five hundred heavy hearts for him too little. I wish that Christ, now weeping, suffering, and contemned of men, were more dear and desirable to many souls than he is. I am sure that if the saints wanted[5] Christ's cross, so profitable, and so sweet, they might, for the gain and glory of it, wish it were lawful, either to buy or borrow his cross. But it is a mercy that the saints have it laid to their hand for nothing; for I know no sweeter way to Heaven, than through free grace, and hard trials together; and one of these cannot well want[6] another. Oh, that time would post faster, and hasten our looked-for communion with that Fair-

[1] Genius. [2] Oh, that. [3] Point of the compass, direction.
[4] Choice. *Wale and choice*, liberty of choice, with full and ample store to choose from.
[5] Were without. [6] Do without.

est, Fairest among the sons of men! Oh, that the day would favor us and come, and put Christ and us into each other's arms! I am sure that a few years will do our turn, and the soldier's hour-glass will soon run out.

Madam, look to your lamp, and look for your Lord's coming, and let your heart dwell aloof from that sweet child. Christ's jealousy will not admit of two equal loves in your Ladyship's heart. He must have one, and that the greatest; a little one to a creature, may, and must suffice a soul married to him. "Thy maker is thy Husband," (Isa. liv. 5.) I would wish you well, and my obligations these many years by-gone[1] speak no less to me; but more I can neither wish nor pray, nor desire for your Ladyship, than Christ singled and waled[2] out from all created good things, or Christ, howbeit, wet in his own blood, and wearing a crown of thorns. I am sure that the saints, at their best, are but strangers to the weight and worth of the incomparable sweetness of Christ. He is so new, so fresh in excellency, every day so new, to those that search more and more in him, as if Heaven could furnish us as many new Christs, (if I may so speak,) as there are days betwixt him and us, and yet he is one and the same. Oh, we love an unknown lover, when we love Christ!

Let me hear how the child is every way. The prayers of a prisoner of Christ be upon him.—Grace for evermore, even whill glory perfect it, be with your Ladyship.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER XCVIII.

TO THE NOBLE, AND CHRISTIAN LADY, THE VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

Madam,—Notwithstanding the great haste of the bearer, I would bless your Ladyship on paper, desiring, that since Christ hath ever envied that the world should have your love by[3] him, that ye give yourself out for Christ, and that ye may be for no other. I know none worthy of you but Christ.

Madam, I am either suffering for Christ, and this is either the sure and good way, or I have done with Heaven, and shall never see God's face, (which I bless him cannot be.)

I write my blessing to that sweet child, that ye have borrowed from God. He is no heritage to you, but a loan: love him as folks do borrowed things. My heart is heavy for you.

They say that the Kirk of Christ hath neither son nor heir, and, therefore, that her enemies shall possess her. But I know that she is not that[4] ill-friended;[5] her Husband is her heir, and she his heritage.

[1] By past. [2] Chosen, culled. [3] Past.
[4] So. [5] Destitute of relatives.

If my Lord would be pleased, I should desire that some were dealt with, for my return to Anwoth: but if that never be, I thank God Anwoth is not Heaven; preaching is not Christ—I hope to wait on.

Let me hear how the child is, and your Ladyship's mind and hopes of him; for it would ease my heart to know that he is well.

I am in good terms with Christ; but oh, my guiltiness! yet he bringeth not pleas betwixt him and me to the streets, and before the sun.

Grace, grace for evermore, be with your Ladyship.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER XCIX.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF EARLSTON.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I received your letter, which refreshed me. Except from your son, and my brother, I have seen few letters from my acquaintance in that country, which maketh me heavy. But I have the company of a Lord, who can teach us all to be kind, and hath the right gate[1] of it; for though, for the present, I have severe ups and downs every day, yet I am abundantly comforted and feasted with my King and Well-beloved daily. It pleaseth him to come and dine with a sad prisoner, and a solitary stranger; his spikenard casteth a smell; yet my sweet hath some sour mixed with it, wherein I must acquiesce; for there is no reason that his comforts be too cheap, seeing they are delicates;—why should he not make them so to his own? But I verily think now that Christ hath led me up to a nick[2] in Christianity that I was never at before; I think all before was but childhood and bairns' play. Since I departed from you, I have been scalded, whill the smoke of Hell's fire went in at my throat, and I would have bought peace with a thousand years' torment in Hell; and I have been up also, after these deep down-castings and sorrows, before the Lamb's white throne, in my Father's inner court, the Great King's dining-hall; and Christ did cast a covering of love on me; he hath casten a coal into my soul, and it is smoking among the straw, and keeping the hearth warm. I look back to what I was before, and I laugh to see the sand-houses[3] I built when I was a child.

At first, the remembrance of the many fair feast-days with my Lord Jesus in public, which are now changed into silent sabbaths, raised a great tempest, and, (if I may speak so,) made the Devil ado in my soul. The Devil came in, and would prompt me to make a plea with Christ, and to lay the blame on him as a hard master: but now these mists are blown away, and I am not only

[1] Way. [2] Notch, degree.

[3] Houses built by children of the sand on the sea-shore, which are swept away by the returning tide: metaphorically, illusory, fleeting expectations.

silenced as to all quarreling, but fully satisfied. Now, I wonder that any man living can laugh upon the world, or give it a hearty good-day. The Lord Jesus hath handled me so, that, as I am now disposed, I think never to be in this world's commons[1] again for a night's lodging. Christ beareth me good company; he hath eased me, when I saw it not, lifting the cross off my shoulders, so that I think it to be but a feather, because underneath are everlasting arms. God forbid it come to bartering or niffering[2] of crosses; for I think my cross so sweet, that I know not where I would get the like of it. Christ's honey-combs drop so abundantly, that they sweeten my gall. Nothing breaketh my heart, but that I cannot get the daughters of Jerusalem, to tell them of my Bridegroom's glory. I charge you in the name of Christ, that ye tell all that ye come to of it;—and yet it is above telling and understanding. Oh, if[3] all the kingdom were as I am, except my bonds! They know not the love-kisses that my only Lord Jesus wasteth on a dawted[4] prisoner. On my salvation, this is the only way to the New City. I know that Christ hath no dumb seals. Would he put his privy-seal upon blank paper? He hath sealed my sufferings with his comforts. I write this to confirm you. I write now what I have seen as well as heard. Now and then my silence burneth up my spirit; but Christ hath said, "Thy stipend is running up with interest in Heaven, as if thou wert preaching;" and this from a King's mouth rejoiceth my heart. At other times, I am sad, dwelling in Kedar's tents.

There are none, (that I yet know of,) but two persons in this town that I dare give my word for; and the Lord hath removed my brethren and my acquaintance far from me; and it may be, that I shall be forgotten in the place where the Lord made me the instrument to do some good. But I see that this is vanity in me; let him make of me what he pleaseth, if he make salvation out of it to me. I am tempted and troubled, that all the Fourteen Prelates should have been armed of God against me only, while the rest of my brethren are still preaching; but I dare not say one word but this—"It is good, Lord Jesus, because thou hast done it."

Wo is me for the Virgin-daughter! wo is me for the desolation of the Virgin-daughter of Scotland! Oh, if[3] my eyes were a fountain of tears, to weep day and night for that poor Widow-kirk, that poor miserable Harlot! Alas, that my Father hath put-to the door my poor Harlot-mother! Oh for that cloud of black wrath, and fury of the indignation of the Lord, that is hanging over the land.

Sir, write to me, I beseech you: I pray you also, be kind to my afflicted brother. Remember my love to your wife; and the prayer and blessing of the prisoner of Christ be on you. Frequent your meetings for prayer and communion with God:—they would be sweet meetings to me.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 16, 1637.

[1] That is, under obligation to this world.
[2] Exchanging.
[3] Oh, that.
[4] Fondled.

LETTER C.

TO THE WORTHY, AND MUCH-HONORED MR. ALEXANDER COLVILLE, OF BLAIR.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—The bearer hereof, Mr. R. F., is most kind to me: I desire you to thank him. But none is so kind as my only royal King and Master, whose cross is my garland. The King dineth with his prisoner, and his spikenard casteth a smell. He hath led me up to such a pitch and nick[1] of joyful communion with himself, as I never knew before. When I look back to by-gones,[2] I judge myself to have been a child at A, B, C, with Christ. Worthy sir, pardon me, I dare not conceal it from you, it is as a fire in my bowels, in His presence who seeth me I speak it! I am pained, pained with the love of Christ; he hath made me sick, and wounded me; hunger for Christ outrunneth faith; I miss faith more than love. Oh, if[3] the Three Kingdoms would come and see! Oh, if[3] they knew his kindness to my soul! It hath pleased him to bring me to this, that I will not strike sails to this world, nor flatter it, nor adore this clay-idol that fools worship. As I am now disposed, I think that I shall neither borrow nor lend with it;[4] and yet I get my meat from Christ with nurture;[5] for seven times a day I am lifted up, and casten down. My dumb sabbaths burden my heart, and make it bleed. I am not without fearful challenges[6] and jealousies[7] sometimes of Christ's love, that he hath casten me over the dyke[8] of the vineyard as a dry tree. But this is my infirmity; by his grace I take myself[9] in these ravings: it is kindly that faith and love both be sick, and fevers are kindly to most joyful communion with Christ.

Ye are blessed who avouch Christ openly before the Prince of this Kingdom, whose eyes are upon you. It is your glory to lift him up on his throne, to carry his train, and bear up the hem of his royal robe. He hath an hiding-place for Mr. Alex. Colville against the storm: go on, and fear not what man can do. The saints seem to have the worst of it, (for apprehensions can make a lie of Christ and his love,) but it is not so. Providence is not rolled upon unequal and crooked wheels; all things work together for the good of those who love God, and are called according to his purpose. Ere it be long, we shall see the white side of God's providence.

My brother's case hath moved me not a little. He wrote to me your care and kindness. Sir, the prisoner's blessing and prayers, I trust, shall not go past you. He that is able to keep you, and to

[1] Degree. [2] Matters by-passed. [3] Oh, that.
[4] Shall have no dealings whatever with. [5] Correction.
[6] Questionings. [7] Suspicions. [8] Wall.
[9] *To take oneself*, to retract one's word.

present you before the presence of his face with joy, establish your heart in the love of Christ.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 19 Feb., 1637.

LETTER CI.

TO EARLSTON, YOUNGER.

HONORED, AND DEAR BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I received your letter, which refreshed my soul.

I thank God, that the court is closed, I think shame of my part of it; I pass now from my unjust summons of unkindness, libelled against Christ my Lord. He is not such a Lord and Master as I took him to be; verily he is God, and I am dust and ashes. I took Christ's glooms[1] to be as good as Scripture speaking wrath; but I have seen the other side of Christ, and the white side of his cross now. I behooved to come to Aberdeen, to learn a new mystery in Christ, that his promise is better to be believed than his looks, and that the Devil can cause Christ's glooms[1] to speak a lie to a weak man. Nay, verily, I was a child before: all by-gones[2] are but bairns' play. I would I could begin to be a Christian in sad earnest.[3] I need not blame Christ if I be not one; for he hath showed me heaven and hell in Aberdeen; but the truth is, for all my sorrow, Christ is nothing in my debt, for comforts have refreshed my soul. I have heard and seen him in his sweetness, so, as I am almost saying, it is not he that I was wont to meet with. He smileth more cheerfully, his kisses are more sweet and soul-refreshing, than the kisses of the Christ I saw before were, (though he be the same;) or rather the King hath led me up to a measure of joy and communion with my Bridegroom that I never attained to before; so that often I think, that I will neither borrow nor lend[4] with this world: I will not strike sail to crosses, nor flatter them to be quit of them, as I have done. Come all crosses, welcome, welcome! so that I may get my heartful of my Lord Jesus. I have been so near him that I have said, "I take instruments[5] that this is the Lord. Leave a token behind thee, that I may never forget this." Now, what can Christ do more to dawt[6] one of his poor prisoners? Therefore, sir, I charge you, in the name of my Lord Jesus, praise with me, and show unto others what he hath done unto my soul. This is the fruit of my sufferings, that I desire Christ's name may be spread abroad in this kingdom, in my behalf. I hope in God not to slander him again; yet in this, I get not my feasts without some mixture of gall; neither am I free

[1] Frowns. [2] By-passed matters. [3] Sober earnest.
[4] That is, have any dealings whatever.
[5] That is, I declare, and I claim that the declaration be recorded, in order that it may become evidence. [6] Fondle.

of old jealousies; for he hath removed my lovers and friends far from me: he hath made my congregation desolate, and taken away my crown: and my dumb sabbaths are like a stone tyed to a bird's foot, that wanteth not wings; they seem to hinder me to flee[1] were it not that I dare not say one word, but, "Well done, Lord Jesus."

We can, in our prosperity, sport ourselves, and be too bold with Christ; yea, be that[2] insolent, as to chide with him; but under the water we dare not speak. I wonder now of my sometimes[3] boldness, to chide and quarrel Christ, to nickname providence, when it stroked me against the hair; but now, swimming in the waters, I think my will is fallen to the ground[4] of the water; I have lost it. I think that I would fain let Christ alone, and give him leave to do with me what he pleaseth, if he would smile upon me. Verily, we know not what an evil it is to spill[5] and indulge ourselves, and to make an idol of our will. I was once that I would not eat, except I had waled[6] meat; now I dare not complain of the crumbs and parings under his table. I was once that I would make the house ado, if I saw not the world carved, and set in order to my liking; now I am silent, when I see God hath set servants on horseback, and is fattening and feeding the children of perdition. I pray God, that I may never find my will again. Oh, if[7] Christ would subject my will to his, and trample it under his feet, and liberate me from that lawless lord!

Now, sir, in your youth gather fast; your sun will mount to the meridian quickly, and thereafter decline. Be greedy of grace. Study above anything, my dear brother, to mortify your lusts. Oh, but pride of youth, vanity, lust, idolizing of the world, and charming pleasures, take long time to root them out! As far as ye are advanced in the way to Heaven, as near as ye are to Christ, as much progress as ye have made in the way of mortification, ye will find that ye are far behind, and have most of your work before you. I never took it to be so hard to be dead to my lusts and to this world. When the day of visitation cometh, and your old idols come weeping about you, ye will have much ado not to break your heart: it is best to give up in time with them, so as ye could at a call quit your part of this world for a drink of water, or a thing of nothing. Verily I have seen the best of this world, a moth-eaten, thread-bare coat; I purpose to lay it aside, being now old and full of holes. Oh, for my house above, not made with hands!

Pray for Christ's prisoner; and write to me. Remember my love to your mother. Desire her, from me, to make ready for removing; the Lord's tide will not bide her; and to seek an heavenly mind, that her heart may be often there. Grace be with you.

Yours, and Christ's Prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 20, 1637.

[1] To fly. [2] So. [3] Former. [4] Bottom.
[5] To spoil. [6] Carefully selected. [7] Oh, that.

LETTER CII.

TO THE LADY CARDONESS.

My Dearly-beloved, and Longed-for in the Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to hear how your soul prospereth, and how the Kingdom of Christ thriveth in you. I exhort you and beseech you in the bowels of Christ, faint not, weary not. There is a great necessity of Heaven; ye must needs have it: all other things, as houses, lands, children, husband, friends, country, credit, health, wealth, honor, may be wanted; but Heaven is your one thing necessary, the good part that shall not be taken from you. See that ye buy the field where the Pearl is. Sell all, and make a purchase of salvation. Think it not easy, for it is a steep ascent to eternal glory: many are lying dead by the way, that are slain with security.

I have now been led by my Lord Jesus to such a nick[1] in Christianity, as I think little of former things. Oh, what I want! I want so many things, that I am almost asking if I have anything at all. Every man thinketh he is rich enough in grace, till he take out his purse, and tell his money, and then he findeth his pack but poor and light in the day of a heavy trial. I found that I had not to bear my expenses, and I should have fainted, if want and penury had not chased me to the Store-house of all. I beseech you make conscience of your ways. Deal kindly, and with conscience with your tenants. To fill a breach, or a hole, make not a greater breach in the conscience. I wish plenty of love to your soul. Let the world be the portion of bastards, make it not yours: after the last trumpet is blown, the world and all its glory will be like an old house that is burnt to ashes, and like an old fallen castle, without a roof. Fy, fy upon us, fools! who think ourselves debtors to the world! My Lord hath brought me to this, that I would not give a drink of cold water for this world's kindness. I wonder that men long after, love, or care for these feathers. It is almost an unco[2] world to me, to think, that men are so mad as to block[3] with dead earth: to give out conscience, and get in clay again, is a strange bargain.

I have written my mind, at length, to your husband. Write to me again his case. I cannot forget him in my prayers: I am looking.[4] Christ hath some claim to him. My counsel is, that ye bear with him when passion overtaketh him. A soft answer putteth away wrath. Answer him in what he speaketh, and apply yourself in the fear of God to him; and then ye will remove a pound weight of your heavy cross, that way, and so it shall become light.

When Christ hideth himself, wait on, and make din till he re-

[1] Degree. [2] Strange. [3] Bargain.
[4] That is, for an answer. Ps. v. 3.

turn; it is not time then to be carelessly patient. I love to be grieved when he hideth his smiles; yet believe his love in a patient on-waiting and believing in the dark. Ye must learn to swim and hold up your head above the water, even when the sense of his presence is not with you to hold up your chin: I trust in God that he will bring your ship safe to land. I counsel you to study sanctification, and to be dead to this world. Urge kindness on Knockbrex. Labor to benefit by his company—the man is acquainted with Christ.

I beg the help of your prayers, for I forget not you. Counsel your husband to fulfil my joy, and to seek the Lord's face. Show him, from me, that my joy and desire is to hear that he is in the Lord. God casteth him often in my mind; I cannot forget him. I hope Christ and he have something to do together. Bless John from me. I write blessings to him, and to your husband, and to the rest of your children. Let it not be said, "I am not in your house," through neglect of the sabbath-exercise.

Your lawful, and loving pastor in his only, only Lord, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 20, 1637.

LETTER CIII.

TO JONET MACCULLOCH.

Dear Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace, be to you—I long to hear how your soul prospereth.

I am as well as a prisoner of Christ can be, feasted and made fat with the comforts of God. Christ's kisses are made sweeter to my soul than ever they were. I would not change my Master with all the kings of clay upon the earth. Oh! my Well-beloved is altogether lovely, and loving. I care not what flesh can do.

I persuade my soul that I delivered the truth of Christ to you. Slip not from it for any boasts[1] or fear of men. If ye go against the truth of Christ that I now suffer for, I shall bear witness against you in the day of Christ.

Sister, fasten your grips fast on Christ. Follow not the guises of this sinful world. Let not this clay portion of earth take up your soul: it is the portion of bastards, and ye are a child of God; and, therefore, seek your Father's heritage. Send up your heart to see the dwelling house and fair rooms in the New City. Fy, fy, upon those who cry, "Up with the world, and down with conscience and Heaven!" We have bairns' wits, and therefore we cannot prize Christ aright. Counsel your husband, and mother to make them ready for eternity—that day is drawing nigh.

Pray for me, the prisoner of Christ; I cannot forget you.

Your lawful pastor, and brother, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 20, 1637.

[1] Threatenings.

LETTER CIV.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON OF KNOCKGRAY.

DEAR BROTHER,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you—I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I expected letters from you ere now.

As for myself, I am here in good case, well feasted with a great King. At my first coming here, I was that[1] bold as to take up a jealousy of Christ's love. I said I was cast over the dyke[2] of the Lord's vineyard, as a dry tree; but I see that if I had been a withered branch, the fire would have burned me long ere now:—blessed be His high name, who hath kept sap in the dry tree. And now, as if Christ had done the wrong, he hath made amends, and hath miskent[3] my ravings; (for a man under the water cannot well command his judgment, far less his faith and love;) because it was a fever, my Lord Jesus forgave me that amongst the rest. He knoweth that in our afflictions we can find a spot in the fairest face that ever was, even in Christ's face. I would not have believed that a gloom[4] should have made me to misken[3] my old Master; but we must be whiles sick. Sickness is but kindly to both faith and love. But oh, how exceedingly is a poor dawted[5] prisoner obliged to sweet Jesus! My tears are sweeter to me than the laughter of the Fourteen Prelates is to them. The worst of Christ, even his chaff, is better than the world's corn.

Dear brother, I beseech you, I charge you in the name and authority of the Son of God, to help me to praise his Highness; and I charge you, also, to tell all your acquaintance, that my Master may get many thanks. Oh, if[6] my hairs, all my members, and all my bones, were well-tuned tongues, to sing the high praises of my great and glorious King! Help me to lift Christ up upon his throne, and to lift Him up above all the thrones of the clay-kings, the dying sceptre-bearers of this world. The prisoner's blessing, the blessing of him that is separate from his brethren, be upon them all who will lend me a lift in this work. Show this to that people with you to whom I sometimes preached.

Brother, my Lord hath brought me to this, that I will not flatter the world for a drink of water. I am no debtor to clay; Christ hath made me dead to that; I now wonder that ever I was such a child, long since, as to beg at such beggars! Fy upon us, who woo such a black-skinned harlot, when we may get such a fair, fair match in Heaven! Oh, that I could give up with this clay-idol, this masked, painted, over-gilded dirt, that Adam's sons adore! We make an idol of our will. As many lusts in us, as many gods; we are all god-makers: we are all like to lose Christ the true God, in the throng of these new, and false gods. Scot-

[1] So. [2] Wall. [3] *To misken*, not to know. [4] Frown. [5] Fondled. [6] Oh, that.

land hath cast her crown off her head; the Virgin-daughter hath lost her garland. Wo, wo to our Harlot-mother. Our day is coming, a time when women shall wish they had been childless, and fathers shall bless miscarrying wombs and dry breasts;—many houses great and fair shall be desolate. This Kirk shall sit on the ground all the night, and the tears shall run down her cheeks. The sun hath gone down upon her prophets. Blessed are the prisoners of hope, who can run into their stronghold, and hide themselves for a little till the indignation be overpast.

Commend me to your wife, your daughters, your son-in-law, and to A. T. Write to me the case of your Kirk. Grace be with you.

I am much moved for my brother. I entreat for your kindness and counsel to him.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 23, 1637.

LETTER CV.

TO THE LADY CARDONESS, ELDER.

WORTHY, AND WELL-BELOVED IN THE LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to hear from you on paper, that I may know how your soul prospereth. My desire and longing is, to hear that ye walk in the truth, and that ye are content to follow the despised, but most lovely Son of God.

I cannot but recommend him unto you, as your Husband, your Well-beloved, your Portion, your Comfort, and your Joy. I speak this of that lovely One, because I praise and commend the ford, (as we use to speak,) as I find it. He hath watered with his sweet comforts an oppressed prisoner: He was always kind to my soul, but never so kind as now, in my greatest extremities. I dine and sup with Christ: He visiteth my soul with the visitations of love, in the night-watches.

I persuade my soul that this is the way to Heaven, and his own truth I now suffer for. I exhort you, in the name of Christ, to continue in the truth, which I delivered unto you. Make Christ sure to your soul; for your day draweth nigh to an end. Many slide back now, who seemed to be Christ's friends, and prove dishonest to Him; but be ye faithful to the death, and ye shall have the crown of life. This span-length of your days, whereof the Spirit of God speaketh, (Psalm xxxix.,) shall, within a short time, come to a finger-breadth, and at length to nothing. Oh, how sweet and comfortable will the feast of a good conscience be to you, when your eye-strings shall break, your face wax pale, and the breath turn cold, and your poor soul come sighing to the windows of the house of clay of your dying body, and shall long to be out, and to have the jailer to open the door, that the prisoner

may be set at liberty! Ye draw nigh the water side: look your accounts: ask for your Guide to take you to the other side. Let not the world be your portion; what have ye to do with dead clay? Ye are not a bastard, but a lawfully begotten child; therefore, set your heart on the inheritance. Go up before-hand, and see your lodging. Look through all your Father's rooms in Heaven: in your Father's house are many dwelling-places—men take a view of lands ere they buy them. I know that Christ hath made the bargain already; but be kind to the house ye are going to, and see it often. Set your heart on things that are above, where Christ is at the right hand of God.

Stir up your husband to mind his own country at home. Counsel him to deal mercifully with the poor people of God under him. They are Christ's, and not his; therefore, desire him to show them merciful dealing and kindness, and to be good to their souls. I desire you to write to me. It may be, that my parish forget me; but my witness is in Heaven that I dow[1] not, I do not forget them: they are my sighs in the night, and my tears in the day. I think myself like a husband plucked from the wife of his youth. O Lord, be my Judge, what joy it would be to my soul, to hear that my ministry hath left the Son of God among them, and that they are walking in Christ! Remember my love to your son and daughter. Desire them from me to seek the Lord in their youth, and to give him the morning of their days. Acquaint them with the word of God and prayer.

Grace be with you. Pray for the prisoner of Christ: in my heart I forget you not.

Your lawful, and loving pastor,
In his only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 6, 1637.

LETTER CVI.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, AND CHRISTIAN LADY, MY LADY VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace to you—I am refreshed with your letter. The right hand of Him, to whom belong the issues from death, hath been gracious to that sweet child: I dow[1] not, I do not forget him and your Ladyship in my prayers.

Madam, as to your own case, I love careful, and withal doing complaints[2] of want of practice; because I observe many who think it holiness enough to complain, and set themselves at nothing; as if to say "I am sick," could cure them—they think complaints a good charm for guiltiness. I hope that ye are wrestling and struggling on, in this dead age, wherein folks have lost tongue, and legs, and arms for Christ. I urge upon you, madam, a nearer

[1] Am not able.

[2] Complaints accompanied by exertion.

communion with Christ, and a growing communion. There are curtains to be drawn by[1] in Christ, that we never saw, and new foldings of love in him. I despair that ever I shall win[2] to the far-end[3] of that love, there are so many plies in it. Therefore, dig deep; and sweat and labor, and take pains for him; and set by as much time in the day for him as you can: he will be won with labor.

I, his exiled prisoner, sought him and he hath rued upon me, and hath made a moan for[4] me, as he doth for his own, (Jer. xxxi. 20; Isaiah xlv. 11;) and I know not what to do with Christ; his love surroundeth and surchargeth me. I am burdened with it, but oh, how sweet and lovely is that burden! I cannot keep it within me: I am so in love with his love, that if his love were not in Heaven, I should be unwilling to go thither. Oh, what weighing, and what telling is in Christ's love! I fear nothing now so much as the laughing of Christ's cross, and the love-showers that accompany it. I wonder what he meaneth to put such a slave at the board-heard,[5] at his own elbow. Oh, that I should lay my black mouth to such a fair, fair, fair face as Christ's! But I dare not refuse to be loved: the cause is not in me, why he hath looked upon me, and loved me; for he got neither bud,[6] nor hire of me; it cost me nothing, it is good-cheap[7] love. Oh, the many pound-weights of his love, under which I am sweetly pressed!

Now, madam, I persuade you, that the greatest part but play with Christianity; they put it by-hand[8] easily. I thought it had been an easy thing to be a Christian, and that to seek God had been at the next door; but oh, the windings, the turnings, the ups and the downs that he hath led me through; and I see yet much way to the ford. He speaketh with my reins in the night season; and in the morning, when I awake, I find his love-arrows, that he shot at me, sticking in my heart. Who will help me to praise? who will come to lift up with me, and set on high his great love? and yet I find that a fire-flaught[9] of challenges will come out at midsummer, and question me—but it is only to keep a sinner in order.

As for friends, I will not think the world to be the world, if that well go not dry. I trust in God, to use the world as a canny[10] or cunning master doth a knave-servant, (at least God give me grace to do so;) he giveth him no handling nor credit, only he entrusteth him with common errands, wherein he cannot play the knave. I pray God that I may not give this world the credit of my joys, and comforts, and confidence—that were to put Christ out of his office. Nay, I counsel you, madam, from a little experience, let Christ keep the great seal, and entrust him so as to hing[11] your vessels great and small, and pin your burdens upon

[1] Aside. [2] Get. [3] Farther end. [4] Bemoaned.
[5] Head of the table. [6] Bribe. [7] Gratuitous.
[8] Easily, but hastily, and in a superficial manner, discharge its duties.
[9] Lightning-flash. [10] Prudent, skilful. [11] Hang.

the Nail fastened in David's house, (Isaiah xxii. 23.) Let me not be well, if ever they get the tutoring of my comforts. Away, away with irresponsal[1] tutors, that would play me a slip, and then Christ would laugh at me, and say, "Well-wared;[2] try again ere ye trust." Now wo is me, for my whorish Mother, the Kirk of Scotland! Oh, who will bewail her!

Now the presence of the great Angel of the Covenant be with you, and that sweet child.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CVII.

TO A GENTLEWOMAN, UPON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I cannot but rejoice, and withal be grieved, at your case. It hath pleased the Lord to remove your husband, (my friend, and this Kirk's faithful professor,) soon to his rest; but, shall we be sorry that our loss is his gain, seeing his Lord would want his company no longer? Think not much of short summons; for, seeing, he walked with his Lord in his life, and desired that Christ should be magnified in him, at his death, ye ought to be silent and satisfied. When Christ cometh for his own, he runneth fast: mercy, mercy to the saints goeth not at leisure; love, love in our Redeemer is not slow, and withal he is homely[3] with you, who cometh at his own hand to your house, and intromitteth,[4] as a friend, with anything that is yours. I think he would fain borrow and lend with you. Now he shall meet with the solacious[5] company, the fair flock and blessed bairn-teme[6] of the first-born, banqueting at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. It is a mercy that the poor wandering sheep get a dyke-side in this stormy day, and a leaking ship a safe harbor, and a sea-sick passenger a sound and soft bed ashore. Wrath, wrath, wrath from the Lord, is coming upon this land, that he hath left behind him. Know, therefore, that the wounds of your Lord Jesus are the wounds of a lover, and that he will have compassion upon a sad-hearted servant; and that Christ hath said, he will have the husband's room in your heart: he loved you in your first husband's time, and he is but wooing you still. Give him heart and chair, house and all; he will not be made companion with any other; love is full of jealousies; he will have all your love—and who should get it but he? I know that ye allow it upon him. There are comforts both sweet and satisfying, laid up for you: wait on. Frist[7] Christ; he is an honest debtor.

Now for mine own case, I think some poor body would be glad

[1] Irresponsible. [2] Well-deserved. [3] Familiar. [4] Intermeddleth.
[5] Solacing. [6] Whole family of children. [7] Give credit to.

of a dawted[1] prisoner's leavings. I have no scarcity of Christ's love: he hath wasted more comforts upon his poor banished servant, than would have refreshed many souls. My burden was once so heavy, that one ounce-weight would have casten the balance, and broken my back; but Christ said, "Hold, hold!" to my sorrow, and hath wiped a bluthered[2] face, which was foul with weeping. I may joyfully go my Lord's errands, with wages in my hands. Deferred hopes need not make my dead-sweir,[3] (as we use to say;) my cross is both my cross and my reward. Oh, that men would sound his high praises! I love Christ's worst reproaches, his glooms,[4] his cross, better than all the world's plastered glory; my heart is not longing to be back again from Christ's country; it is a sweet soil I am come to. I, (if any in the world,) have good cause to speak much good of him. Oh, Hell were a good-cheap[5] price to buy him at! Oh, if[6] all the Three Kingdoms were witnesses to my pained, pained soul, overcome with Christ's love!

I thank you most kindly, my dear sister, for your love to, and tender care of my brother. I shall think myself obliged to you, if ye continue his friend. He is more to me than a brother now, being engaged to suffer for so honorable a Master and cause.

Pray for Christ's Prisoner; and grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CVIII.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND CHRISTIAN LADY, MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Upon the offered opportunity of this worthy bearer, I could not omit to answer the heads of your letter.

1stly, I think not much to set down on paper some good things anent Christ, that Sealed and Holy Thing; and to feed my soul with raw wishes to be one with Christ; for a wish is but broken and half love; but verily to obey this, "Come and see," is a harder matter! But oh, I have rather smoke than fire, and guessings rather than real assurances of him. I have little or nothing to say, that I am as one who hath found favor in his eyes; but there is some pining and mismannered[7] hunger, that maketh me miscall[8] and nickname Christ as a changed Lord; but alas! it is ill-flitten.[9] I cannot believe without a pledge. I cannot take God's word without a caution,[10] as if Christ had lost and sold his

[1] Cockered. [2] Blurred. [3] Extremely reluctant. [4] Frowns.
[5] Gratuitous. [6] Oh, that. [7] Unmannerly.
[8] *To miscall*, to call names, to abuse.
[9] Denoting that the criminations or reprehensions of a rebuker come with a very bad grace from him, because of his being supposed to be equally, or more guilty in the same, or in a similar respect.
[10] Surety.

credit, and were not in my books responsal,[1] and law-biding:[2] but this is my way; for his way is, (Eph. i. 13,) "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

2ndly, Ye write that I am filled with knowledge, and stand not in need of these warnings; but certainly my light is dim, when it cometh to handy-grips;[3] and how many have full coffers and yet empty bellies! Light, and the saving use of light, are far different. Oh, what need then have I to have the ashes blown away from my dying-out fire! I may be a bookman, and be an idiot and stark fool in Christ's way! Learning will not beguile Christ. The Bible beguiled the Pharisees, and so may I be misled. Therefore, as night-watchers hold one another waking, by speaking to one another, so have we need to hold one another on foot: sleep stealeth away the light of watching, even the light that reproveth sleeping. I doubt not but moe would fetch Heaven, if they believed not Heaven to be at the next door. The world's negative holiness, no adulterer, no murderer, no thief, no cozener, maketh men believe they are already glorified saints: but the sixth chapter to the Hebrews may affright us all, when we hear that men may take of the gifts and common graces of the Holy Spirit, and a taste of the powers of the life to come, to Hell with them. Here is reprobate silver, which yet seemeth to have the king's image and superscription upon it.

3rdly, I find you complaining of yourself, and it becometh a sinner so to do. I am not against you in that; sense of death is a sib friend,[4] and of kin and blood to life; the more sense, the more life; the more sense of sin, the less sin. I would love my pain and soreness, and my wounds, howbeit these should bereave me of my night's sleep, better than my wounds without pain. Oh, how sweet a thing it is, to give Christ his handful of broken arms and legs, and disjointed bones!

4thly, Be not afraid for little grace; Christ soweth his living seed, and he will not lose his seed: if he have the guiding of my stock and state, it shall not miscarry. Our spilled[5] works, losses, deadness, coldness, wretchedness, are the ground upon which the Good Husbandman laboreth.

5thly, Ye write that his compassions fail not, notwithstanding that your service to Christ miscarrieth; to the which I answer, "God forbid that there were buying and selling, and blocking[6] for as good again, betwixt Christ and us: for then free grace might go to play, and a Saviour sing dumb,[7] and Christ go to sleep. But we go to Heaven with light shoulders, and all the bairn-teme,[8] and the vessels great and small that we have, are fastened upon the safe Nail," (Isa. xxii. 23, 24.) The only danger is, that we give grace more to do than God giveth it, that is, by turning his grace into wantonness.

6thly, Ye write, that few see your guiltiness, and that ye can-

[1] Responsible. [2] Awaiting, or standing by a sentence of law.
[3] Close struggling. [4] Near relative. [5] Spoiled, ruined.
[6] Planning of bargains. [7] Be silenced. [8] Whole family of children.

not be free with many, as with me: I answer, "Blessed be God, that Christ and we are not heard before men's courts; it is at home betwixt him and us, that pleas are taken away."

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CIX.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, AND CHRISTIAN LADY, MY LADY BOYD.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

I cannot but thank your Ladyship, for your letter, that hath refreshed my soul. I think myself many ways obliged to your Ladyship for your love to my afflicted brother, now embarked with me in that same cause. His Lord hath been pleased to put him on truth's side. I hope that your Ladyship will befriend him with your counsel and countenance in that country, where he is a stranger; and your Ladyship needeth not fear but your kindness to his own will be put up into Christ's accounts.

Now, madam, for your Ladyship's case, I rejoice exceedingly, that the Father of lights hath made you see that there is a nick[1] in Christianity, which ye contend to be at; and that is, to quit the right eye, and the right hand, and to keep the Son of God. I hope your desire is to make him your garland, and that your eye looketh up the mount, which certainly is nothing but the new creature. Fear not, Christ will not cast water upon your smoking coal; and then, who else dare do it if he say nay? Be sorry at corruption, and be not secure. That companion lay with you in your mother's womb, and was as early friends with you as the breath of life; and Christ will not have it otherwise; for he delighteth to take up fallen bairns, and to mend broken brows;—binding up of wounds is his office, (Isaiah, lxi.) First, I am glad that Christ will get employment of his calling in you. Many a whole soul is in Heaven, which was sicker than ye are. He is content, that ye lay broken arms and legs on his knee, that he may spelk[2] them. Secondly, Hiding of his face is wise love,—his love is not fond, doting, and reasonless,—to give your head no other pillow, whill ye be in at Heaven's gates, but to lye betwixt his breasts, and lean upon his bosom. Nay, his bairns must often have the frosty cold side of the hill, and set down both their bare feet among thorns: his love hath eyes, and in the meantime is looking on. Our pride must have winter weather to rot it. But I know that Christ and ye will not be heard. Ye will whisper it over betwixt yourselves, and agree again; for the anchor-tow[3] abideth fast within the veil: the end of it is in Christ's ten fingers—who dare pull if he hold?

[1] Notch, degree. [2] *To spelk*, to bind up with splints. [3] Cable.

"I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying, Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, Jacob." (Isa. xli. 13, 14.) The sea-sick passenger shall come to land—Christ will be the first that will meet you on the shore. I hope that your Ladyship will keep the King's highway. Go on, in the strength of the Lord, in haste, as if ye had not leisure to speak to the inn-keepers by the way—He is over beyond time on the other side of the water, who thinketh long[1] for you.

For my unfaithful self, madam, I must say a word. At my first coming hither, the Devil made many a black lie of my Lord Jesus, and said the court was changed, and he was angry, and would give an evil servant his leave[2] at mid-term. But he gave me grace not to take my leave;[2] I resolved to bide summons, and sit, howbeit it was suggested and said, "What should be done with a withered tree, but over the dyke[3] with it?" But now, now, (I dare not, I dow not[4] keep it up,) who is feasted as his poor exiled prisoner? I think shame of the board-head[5] and the first-mess, and the royal King's dining-hall, and that my black hand should come upon such a ruler's table. But I cannot mend it, Christ must have his will: only he paineth my soul so, sometimes with his love, that I have been nigh to pass modesty, and to cry out, he hath left a smoking, burning coal in my heart, and gone to the door himself, and left me and it together. Yet it is not desertion: I know not what it is, but I was never so sick for him as now. I durst not challenge[6] my Lord, if I got no more for Heaven, it is a dawting[7] cross. I know he hath other things to do than to play with me, and trindle[8] an apple with me, and that this feast will end. Oh, for instruments[9] in God's name, that this is he! and that I may make use of it, when it may be, a near friend within me will say, and when it will be said by a challenging[10] devil, "Where is thy God?" Since I know that it will not last, I desire but to keep broken meat: but let no man after me slander Christ for his cross.

The great Lord of the Covenant, who brought from the dead the great Shepherd of his sheep, by the blood of the Eternal Covenant, establish you, and keep you and yours, to his appearance!

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CX.

TO THE LADY KASKIBERRY.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace, be to you—I long to hear how your Ladyship is. I know not how to requite your Lady-

[1] Longeth. [2] Discharge from service. [3] Wall. [4] Am not able.
[5] Head of the table. [6] Upbraid. [7] Fondling.
[8] To trundle. [9] Documents in proof. [10] Upbraiding.

ship's kindness; but your love to the saints, madam, is laid up in Heaven: I know it is for your well-beloved Christ's sake, that ye make his friends so dear to you, and concern yourself so much in them.

I am in this house of pilgrimage, every way in good ease: Christ is most kind and loving to my soul. It pleaseth him to feast, with his unseen consolations, a stranger and an exiled prisoner: and I would not exchange my Lord Jesus with all the comfort out of Heaven.—His yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

This is his truth which I now suffer for; for he hath sealed it with his blessed presence: I know that Christ shall yet win the day, and gain the battle in Scotland. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CXI.

TO THE LADY EARLSTON.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I exhort you to go on in your journey; your day is short, and your afternoon-sun will soon go down. Make an end of your accounts with your Lord; for death and judgment are tides that bide[1] no man. Salvation is supposed to be at the door, and Christianity is thought an easy task: but I find it hard, and the way strait and narrow, were it not that my Guide is content to wait on me, and to care for a tired traveller. Hurt not your conscience with any known sin. Let your children be as so many flowers, borrowed from God. If the flowers die or wither, thank God for a summer loan of them, and keep good neighborhood, to borrow and lend[2] with him. Set your heart upon Heaven, and trouble not your spirit with this clay-idol of the world, which is but vanity, and hath but the lustre of the rainbow in the air, which cometh and goeth with a flying March-shower:—clay is the idol of bastards, not the inheritance of the children.

My Lord hath been pleased to make many unknown faces laugh upon me, and hath made me well-content of a borrowed fire-side, and a borrowed bed. I am feasted with the joys of the Holy Ghost, and my royal King beareth my charges honorably. I love the smell of Christ's sweet breath better than the world's gold. I would I had help to praise him.

The great Messenger of the Covenant, the Son of God, establish you on your Rock, and keep you to the day of his coming.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

[1] *To bide*, to wait for.

[2] To be on the most intimate terms with.

LETTER CXII.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER, MR. DAVID DICKSON.

REVEREND, AND DEAREST BROTHER,—What joy have I out of Heaven's gates, but that my Lord Jesus be glorified in my bonds? Blessed be ye of the Lord, who contribute anything to my obliged and indebted praises. Dear brother, help me, a poor dyvour,[1] to pay the interest, for I cannot come nigh to render the principal. It is not jest nor sport which maketh me to speak and write as I do: I never before came to that nick[2] or pitch of communion with Christ, that I have now attained to. For my confirmation, I have been these two Sabbaths or three in private, taking instruments[3] in the name of God, that my Lord Jesus and I have kissed each other in Aberdeen, the house of my pilgrimage. I seek not an apple to play me with, He knoweth, whom I serve in the Spirit, but a seal. I but beg earnest, and am content to suspend and frist[4] glory whill supper-time. I know that this world will not last with me; for my moonlight is noon-day light, and my four-hours[5] above my feasts, when I was a preacher; at which times, also, I was embraced very often in his arms. But who can blame Christ to take me on behind him, if I may say so, on his white horse, or in his chariot, paved with love, through a water? Will not a father take his little dawted Davie[6] in his arms, and carry him over a ditch or a mire? My short legs could not step over this lair,[7] or sinking mire; and, therefore, my Lord Jesus will bear me through. If a change come, and a dark day, so being that he will keep my faith without flaw or crack, I dare not blame him, howbeit I get no more whill I come to Heaven. But ye know that the physic behooved to have sugar; my faith was fallen aswoon,[8] and Christ but held up a swooning man's head. Indeed I pray not for a dawted[9] bairn's diet; he knoweth that I would have Christ, sour or sweet; any way, so being it be Christ indeed. I stand not now upon pared apples, or sugared dishes; but I cannot blame him to give. I must gape and make a wide mouth. Since Christ will not pantry up[10] joys, he must be welcome, who will not bide away. I seek no other fruit, than that he may be glorified; he knoweth that I would take hard fare to have his name set on high.

I bless you for your counsel. I hope to live by faith, and swim without a mass or bundle of joyful sense under my chin; at least, to venture, albeit I should be ducked.

1 Bankrupt.
2 Notch, degree.
3 *To take instruments*, is for a person who has an interest in a court to declare, upon a decision, that he claims the benefit of that decision, and views the matter as finished.
4 *To frist*, to postpone, in the hope, however, of ultimately possessing.
5 Slight afternoon's repasts.
6 Little fondled boy.
7 Bog, in which one must sink.
8 In a swoon.
9 Fondled.
10 That is, lock up in the pantry.

Now for my case: I think that the council should be essayed, and the event referred to God:—duties are ours, and events are God's.

I shall go through yours upon the Covenant at leisure, and write to you my mind there-anent;[1] and anent the Arminian contract betwixt the Father and the Son. I beseech you, set to,[2] to go through Scripture. Yours on the Hebrews is in great request with all who would be acquainted with Christ's Testament. I purpose, God willing, to set about Hosea, and to try if I can get it to the press here.

It refresheth me much, that ye are so kind to my brother. I hope your council will do him good. I recommend him to you, since I am so far from him. I am glad that the dying servant of God, famous and faithful Mr. Cunningham, sealed your ministry before he fell asleep.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CXIII.

TO JEAN BROWN.

Well-beloved, and Dear Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I received your letter, which I esteem an evidence of your Christian affection to me, and of your love to my honorable Lord and Master. My desire is, that your communion with Christ may grow, and that your reckonings may be put by hand[3] with your Lord ere ye come to the water-side.

Oh, who knoweth how sweet Christ's kisses are! Who hath been more kindly embraced and kissed than I, his banished prisoner? If the comparison could stand, I would not exchange Christ with Heaven itself. He hath left a dart and arrow of love in my soul, and it paineth me till he come and taketh it out. I find pain of these wounds, because I would have possession. I know now that this worm-eaten apple, the plastered, rotten world, which the silly children of this world are beating and buffeting, and pulling each other's ears for, is a portion for bastards good enough; and that it is all they have to look for. I am not offended that my adversaries stay at home at their own fireside, with more yearly rent than I. Should I be angry that the Goodman of this house of the world casteth a dog a bone to hurt his teeth? He hath taught me to be content with a borrowed fire-side, and an unco[4] bed; and I think I have lost nothing, the income is so great. Oh, what telling is in Christ! Oh, how weighty is my fair garland, my crown, my fair supping-hall in

[1] Concerning it.
[2] *To set to*, to determine, to begin.
[3] Concluded.
[4] Strange.

glory, where I shall be above the blows and buffetings of prelates! Let this be your desire, and let your thoughts dwell much upon that blessedness that abideth you in the other world. The fair side of the world will be turned to you quickly, when ye shall see the crown. I hope that ye are near your lodging. Oh! but I would think myself blessed, for my part, to win to[1] the house before the shower come on! for God hath a quiver full of arrows to shoot at, and shower down upon Scotland.

Ye have the prayers of a prisoner of Christ. I desire Patrick to give Christ his young love, even the flowers of it, and to put it by all others. It were good to start soon to the way; he should thereby have a great advantage in the evil day. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CXIV.

TO MR. JOHN FERGUSHILL.

Reverend, and Well-beloved in the Lord,—I was refreshed with your letter. I am sorry for that lingering and longsome visitation that is upon your wife; but I know that ye take it as the mark of a lawfully begotten child, and not of a bastard, to be under your Father's rod. Till ye be in Heaven, it will be but foul weather—one shower up and another down. The lintel-stone and pillars of the New Jerusalem suffer more knocks of God's hammer and tool than the common side-wall stones: and if twenty crosses be written for you in God's book, they will come to nineteen, and then, at last, to one, and after that to nothing; but your head shall lie betwixt Christ's breasts for evermore, and his own soft hand shall dry your face; and wipe away your tears. As for public sufferings for his truth, your Master also will see to these. Let us put him into his own office, to comfort and deliver. The gloom[2] of Christ's cross is worse than itself.

I cannot keep up what he hath done to my soul. My dear brother, will I not get help of you to praise, and to lift Christ up on high? He hath pained me with his love, and hath left a love-arrow in my heart, that hath made a wound, and swelled me up with desires, so that I am to be pitied for want of real possession. Love would have the company of the party loved: and my greatest pain is the want of him, not of his joys and comforts, but of a near union and communion.

This is his truth, I am fully persuaded, which I now suffer for: for Christ hath taken upon him to be witness to it by his sweet comforts to my soul; and shall I think him a false witness, or that he would subscribe blank paper? I thank his high and

[1] Reach. [2] Frown.

dreadful name for what he hath given. I hope to keep his seal and his pawn till he come and loose it himself. I defy Hell to put me off it. But he is Christ, and he hath met with his prisoner, and I took instruments in his own hand[1] that it was he, and none other for him. When the Devil fenceth[2] a bastard-court in my Lord's ground, and giveth me forged summons, it will be my shame to misbelieve,[3] after such a fair, broad seal: and yet Satan and my apprehension sometimes make a lie of Christ, as if he hated me; but I dare believe no evil of Christ. If he would cool my love-fever for himself with real presence and possession, I would be rich; but I dare not be mislearned,[4] and seek more in that kind, howbeit it be no shame to beg at Christ's door. I pity my adversaries. I grudge not that my Lord keepeth them at their own fire-side, and hath given me a borrowed bed and a borrowed fire-side:—let the good-man of the house cast the dog a bone! why should I take offence? I rejoice that the broken bark shall come to land, and that Christ will, on the shore, welcome the sea-sick passenger. We have need of a great stock against this day of trial that is coming. There is neither chaff nor corn in Scotland, but it shall once pass through God's sieve. Praise, praise, and pray for me; for I cannot forget you. I know that ye will be friendly to my afflicted brother, who is now embarked in the same cause with me. Let him have your counsel and comforts.

Remember my love in Christ to your wife; her health is coming, and her salvation sleepeth not. Ye have the prayers and blessing of a prisoner in Christ. Sow fast, deal bread plentifully. The pantry-door will be locked on the bairns, in appearance, ere long.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CXV.

TO HIS REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER, MR. ROBERT DOUGLAS.

My very Reverend, and Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to see you on paper. I cannot but write you, that this which I now suffer for is Christ's truth; because he hath been pleased to seal my sufferings with joy unspeakable and glorious. I know that he will not put his seal upon blank paper; Christ hath not dumb seals, neither will he be a witness to a lie. I beseech you, my dear brother, to help me to praise, and to lift Christ up on his throne above the shields of the earth. I am astonished and confounded at the greatness of his kindness to such a sinner. I know that Christ and I shall never be even;[5] I shall die in his debt. He hath left an arrow in

[1] That is, I declared, and claimed that the declaration might be recorded for evidence. [2] Openeth. [3] Not to believe aright.
[4] Ill-bred. [5] Quits.

my heart that paineth me for want of real possession; and Hell cannot quench this coal of God's kindling. I wish no man to slander Christ, or his cross, for my cause: for I have much cause to speak much good of him; he hath brought me to a nick[1] and degree of communion with himself that I knew not before. The din and gloom[2] of our Lord's cross is more fearful and hard than the cross itself. He taketh the bairns in his arms when they come to a deep water; at least, when they lose ground, and are put to swim, then his hand is under their chin.

Let me be helped by your prayers; and remember my love to your kind wife. Grace be with you.

Your Brother, and Christ's Prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 7, 1637.

LETTER CXVI.

TO THE MUCH HONORED WILLIAM RIGGE, OF ATHERNIE.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I received your long-looked-for and short letter; I would that ye had spoken more to me, who stand in need. I find Christ, as ye write, aye the longer the better, and, therefore, cannot but rejoice in His salvation, who hath made my chains my wings, and hath made me a king over my crosses, and over my adversaries:—glory, glory, glory to his high, high and holy name! Not one ounce, not one grain-weight more is laid on me than he hath enabled me to bear; and I am not so much wearied to suffer as Zion's haters are to persecute. Oh, if[3] I could find a way in any measure, to strive to be even with Christ's love! but that I must give over. Oh, who would help a dyvour[4] to pay praises to the King of saints, who triumpheth in his weak servants!

I see that if Christ but ride upon a worm or feather, his horse will neither stumble nor fall. The worm Jacob is made by him a new, sharp, threshing instrument, having teeth to thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and to make the hills as chaff, and to fan them, so as the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them, (Isa. xli. 14, 15, 16.) Christ's enemies are but breaking their own heads in pieces, upon the Rock laid in Zion, and the Stone is not removed out of its place. Faith hath cause to take courage from our very afflictions; the Devil is but a whetstone to sharpen the faith and patience of the saints. I know that he but heweth and polisheth stones all this time for the New Jerusalem.

But in all this, three things have much moved me, since it hath pleased my Lord to turn my moon-light into day-light. First he hath yoked[5] me to work, to wrestle with Christ's love of longing,

[1] Degree. [2] Frown. [3] Oh, that.
[4] Bankrupt. [5] Bound.

wherewith I am sick, pained, fainting, and like to die, because I cannot get himself, which I think a strange sort of desertion; for I have not himself, (whom if I had, my love-sickness would cool, and my fever go away; at least, I should know the heat of the fire of complacency, which would cool the scorching heat of the fire of desire,) and yet I have no penury of his love; and so I dwine,[1] I die, and he seemeth not to rue on me. I take instruments in his hand,[2] that I would have him, but I cannot get him; and my best cheer is black hunger;—I bless him for that feast.

Secondly, Old challenges[3] now and then revive, and cast all down; I go halting and sighing, fearing there be an unseen process yet coming out, and that heavier than I can answer. I cannot read distinctly my surety's act of cautionry[4] for me in particular, and my discharge; and sense, rather than faith, assureth me of what I have;—so unable am I to go,[5] but by a hold. I could, with reverence of my Lord, forgive Christ, if he would give me as much faith as I have hunger for him. I hope the pardon is now obtained, but the peace is not so sure to me as I would wish: yet, one thing I know, there is not a way to Heaven but the way which he hath graced me to profess and suffer for.

Thirdly, Wo, wo is me for the Virgin-daughter of Scotland, and for the fearful desolation and wrath appointed for this land; and yet all are sleeping, eating, and drinking, laughing and sporting, as if all were well. Oh our dim gold! our dumb, blind pastors! the sun is gone down upon them, and our nobles bid Christ fend for[6] himself, if he be Christ. It were good, that we should learn in time, the way to our stronghold.

Sir, howbeit not acquainted, remember my love to your wife. I pray God to establish you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 9, 1637.

LETTER CXVII.

TO MR. ALEXANDER HENDERSON.

My Reverend, and Dear Brother,—I received your letters. They are as apples of gold to me, for with my sweet feasts, (and they are above the deserving of such a sinner, high and out of measure,) I have sadness to ballast me, and weight[7] me a little. It is but his boundless wisdom which hath taken the tutoring of His witless child; and, he knoweth that to be drunken with comforts is not safest for our stomachs. However it be, the din, and noise, and glooms[8] of Christ's cross are weightier than itself.

[1] Pine away.
[2] That is, I declare in Christ's court, and I claim that the declaration be recorded in order that it may become evidence. [3] Self-accusations. [4] Suretyship.
[5] Walk. [6] Shift for. [7] Depress. [8] Frowns.

I protest to you, (my witness is in Heaven,) that I could wish many pound-weights added to my cross, to know that by my sufferings Christ were set forward in his kingly office in this land. Oh! what is my skin to his glory; or my losses, or my sad heart, to the apple of the eye of our Lord, and his beloved spouse, his precious truth, his royal privileges, the glory of manifested justice in giving of his foes a dash, the testimony of his faithful servants, who do glorify him, when he rideth upon poor weak worms, and triumpheth in them? I desire you to pray, that I may come out of this furnace with honesty, and that I may leave Christ's truth no worse than I found it; and that this most honorable cause may neither be stained nor weakened.

As for your cause, my reverend, and dearest brother, ye are the talking of the north and south; and looked to so as if ye were all crystal glass. Your motes and dust would soon be proclaimed, and trumpets blown at your slips; but I know that ye have laid help upon One that is mighty. Intrust not your comforts to men's airy and frothy applause, neither lay your down-castings on the tongues of salt[1] mockers and reproachers of godliness. "As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet still known," God hath called you to Christ's side, and the wind is now in Christ's face in this land; and seeing ye are with him, ye cannot expect the lee-side, or the sunny side of the brae.[2] But I know that ye have resolved to take Christ upon any terms whatsoever. I hope that ye do not rue, though your cause be hated, and prejudices are taken up against it. The shields of the world think our Master cumbersome wares, and that he maketh too great din, and that his cords and yokes make blains and deep scores in their neck; therefore, they kick. They say "This man shall not reign over us."

Let us pray one for another. He, who hath made you a chosen arrow in his quiver, hide you in the hollow of his hand! I am

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 9, 1637.

LETTER CXVIII.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE MY LORD LOUDON.

My very Noble, and Honorable Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I make bold to write to your Lordship, that you may know the honorable cause which ye are graced to profess, is Christ's own truth. Ye are many ways blessed of God, who have taken upon you to come out to the streets with Christ on your forehead, when so many are ashamed of him, and hide him, as it were, under their cloak, as if he were a stolen Christ.

[1] Bitter.

[2] Slope. *Sunny side of the brae*, the most warm, sheltered, and comfortable situation.

If this faithless generation, (and especially the nobles of this kingdom,) thought not Christ dear wares, and religion expensive, hazardous, and dangerous, they would not slip from his cause as they do, and stand looking on with their hands folded behind their back when louns[1] are running with the spoil of Zion on their back, and the boards of the Son of God's tabernacle. Law and justice are to be had by any, especially for money and moyen;[2] but Christ can get no law, good-cheap,[3] or dear. It were the glory and honor of you, who are the nobles of this land, to plead for your wronged Bridegroom, and his oppressed spouse, as far as zeal, and standing law will go with you. Your ordinary logic from the event, that it will do no good to the cause, and, therefore, silence is best, till the Lord put-to his own hand, is not, (with reverence to your Lordship's learning,) worth a straw. Events are God's. Let us do, and not plead against God's office. Let Him sit at his own helm, who moderateth all events. It is not a good course to complain that we cannot get a providence of gold, when our laziness, cold zeal, temporizing, and faithless fearfulness spilleth[4] good providence.

Your Lordship will pardon me; I am not of that mind, that tumults or arms is the way to put Christ on his throne: or that Christ will be served, and truth vindicated, only with the arm of flesh and blood: nay, Christ doth his turn with less din, than with garments rolled in blood. But I would that the zeal of God were in the nobles to do their part for Christ: and I must be pardoned to write to your Lordship this.

I dow not,[5] I dare not, but speak to others what God hath done to the soul of his poor, afflicted exile Prisoner. His comfort is more than I ever knew before; he hath sealed the honorable cause which I now suffer for, and I shall not believe that Christ will put his amen, and ring[6] upon an imagination. He hath made all his promises good to me, and hath filled up all the blanks with his own hand. I would not exchange my bonds with the plastered joy of this whole world. It hath pleased him to make a sinner, the like of me, an ordinary banqueter in his house-of-wine, with that royal princely One, Christ Jesus. Oh what weighing! Oh what telling is in his love! How sweet must he be, when that black and burdensome tree, his own cross, is so perfumed with joy and gladness! Oh, for help to lift him up by praises on his royal throne! I seek no more than that his name may be spread abroad in me, that meikle[7] good may be spoken of Christ on my behalf; and this being done, my losses, place, stipend, credit, ease, and liberty, shall all be made up to my full contentment and joy of heart.

I shall be confident that your Lordship will go on in the strength of the Lord, and keep Christ, and avouch him, that he may read

[1] Scoundrels, low, worthless fellows. [2] Interest.
[3] Very cheap, gratuitous. [4] Spoileth.
[5] I am not able, indeed I have not courage to refrain from speaking.
[6] Assure as by the marriage covenant. [7] Much.

your name publicly before men and angels. I shall entreat your Lordship to exhort and encourage that Nobleman, your Chief,[1] to do the same; but I am wo[2] that many of you find a new wisdom, which deserveth not such a name—it were better that men would see that their wisdom be holy, and their holiness wise.

I must be bold to desire your Lordship to add to your former favors to me, (for the which your Lordship hath a prisoner's blessing and prayers,) this, that ye would be pleased to befriend my brother, now suffering for the same cause; for as he is to dwell nigh your Lordship's bounds, your Lordship's word and countenance may help him.

Thus recommending your Lordship to the saving grace, and tender mercy of Christ Jesus, our Lord, I rest,

Your Lordship's obliged servant in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 9, 1637.

LETTER CXIX.

TO MR. WILLIAM DALGLEISH, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

Reverend, and Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I am well. My Lord Jesus is kinder to me than ever he was. It pleaseth him to dine and sup with his afflicted prisoner: a King feasteth me, and his spikenard casteth a sweet smell. Put Christ's love to the trial, and put upon it our burdens, and then it will appear love indeed: we employ not his love, and, therefore, we know it not. I verily count the sufferings of my Lord more than this world's lustred[3] and over-gilded glory. I dare not say but my Lord Jesus hath fully recompensed my sadness with his joys, my losses with his own presence. I find it a sweet and rich thing to exchange my sorrows with Christ's joys, my afflictions with that sweet peace I have with himself.

Brother, this is his own truth I now suffer for. He hath sealed my sufferings with his own comforts, and I know that he will not put his seal upon blank paper; his seals are not dumb nor delusive, to confirm imaginations and lies. Go on, my dear brother, in the strength of the Lord, not fearing man, who is a worm, nor the son of man that shall die. Providence hath a thousand keys, to open a thousand suudry doors for the deliverance of his own, when it is even come to a *conclamatum est.*[4] Let us be faithful; and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for him, and lay Christ's part on himself, and leave it there. Duties are ours,

1 The Earl of Argyll, Chief of the Clan Campbell. 2 Grieved.

3 Lustrous.

4 That is, when it is quite desperate, when it is given up for lost. A form of speech taken from a custom among the Romans, of calling upon a person, who had died, several times by his name. Hence those, who had given up a friend for lost, or who supposed him to be dead, were said *eum conclamavisse;* in like manner it was said of a thing when it was reckoned quite desperate, *conclamatum est,* "all is over."

events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court (if I may so speak) upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, "How wilt thou do this and that?" we lose ground. We have nothing to do there. It is our part to let the Almighty exercise his own office, and steer his own helm. There is nothing left to us, but to see how we may be approved of him, and how we may roll the weight of our weak souls in well-doing upon Him, who is God omnipotent: and when what we thus essay miscarrieth, it will neither be our sin nor cross.

Brother, remember the Lord's word to Peter; "Simon, lovest thou me? Feed my sheep." No greater testimony of our love to Christ can be, than to feed carefully and faithfully his lambs.

I am in no better neighborhood with the ministers here than before: they cannot endure that any speak of me, or to me. Thus I am, in the meantime, silent, which is my greatest grief. Dr. Barron hath often disputed with me, especially about Arminian controversies, and for the ceremonies. Three yokings[1] laid him by; and I have not been troubled with him since. Now, he hath appointed a dispute before witnesses; I trust that Christ and truth will do for themselves.

I hope, brother, that ye will help my people; and write to me what you hear the Bishop is to do with them. Grace be with you.

Your brother in bonds, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXX.

TO MR. HUGH MACKAIL, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

Reverend, and Dear Brother,—I bless you for your letter. —He[2] is come down as rain upon the mown grass; he hath revived my withered root; and he is the dew of herbs. I am most secure in this prison: salvation is for walls in it; and what think ye of these walls? He maketh the dry plant to bud as the lily, and to blossom as Lebanon;—the great Husbandman's blessing cometh down upon the plants of righteousness. Who may say this, my dear brother, if I, his poor exiled stranger and prisoner, may not say it? Howbeit all the world should be silent, I cannot hold my peace. Oh, how many black accounts have Christ and I rounded over together in the house of my pilgrimage! and how fat a portion he hath given to a hungry soul! I had rather have Christ's four-hours,[3] than have dinner and supper both in one from any other—his dealing, and the way of his judgments are past finding out. No preaching, no book, no learning could give me that, which it behooved me to come and get in this town. But what of all this, if I were not misted,[4] and confounded, and aston-

[1] A set-to. Yoking is properly the time during which a horse is in the yoke.
[2] In the Scottish dialect, *He* is often used, as הוּא is in Hebrew, as a name of God.
[3] Slight afternoon refreshment.
[4] Bewildered.

ished how to be thankful, and how to get him praised for evermore? And, what is more, he hath been pleased to pain me with his love, and my pain groweth through want of real possession.

Some have written to me, that I am possibly too joyful of the cross; but my joy overleapeth the cross, it is bounded and terminated upon Christ. I know that the sun will over-cloud and eclipse, and that I shall again be put to walk in the shadow: but Christ must be welcome to come and go, as he thinketh meet. Yet he would be more welcome to me, I trow, to come, than to go; and I hope he pitieth and pardoneth me, in casting apples to me, at such a fainting time as this—holy, and blessed is his name. It was not my flattering of Christ that drew a kiss from his mouth: but he would send me as a spy into this wilderness of suffering, to see the land, and try the ford; and I cannot make a lie of Christ's cross; I can report nothing but good both of him and it, lest others should faint. I hope, when a change cometh, to cast anchor at midnight upon the Rock, (which he hath taught me to know in this day-light,) whither I may run, when I must say my lesson without book, and believe in the dark. I am sure it is sin to tarrow[1] at Christ's good meat, and not to eat when he saith, "Eat, O well-beloved, and drink abundantly." If he bear me on his back, or carry me in his arms over this water, I hope for grace to set down my feet on dry ground, when the way is better: but this is slippery ground; my Lord thought good I should go by a hold, and lean on my Well-beloved's shoulder—it is good to be ever taking from him. I desire that he may get the fruit of praises, for dawting,[2] and thus dandling me on his knee: and I may give my bond of thankfulness, so being I have Christ's backbond[3] again for my relief, that I shall be strengthened by his powerful grace, to pay my vows to him. But, truly, I find that we have the advantage of the brae[4] upon our enemies: we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us; and they know not wherein our strength lyeth.

Pray for me. Grace be with you.

Your brother in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXI.

TO MY LADY BOYD.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you—The Lord hath brought me to Aberdeen, where I see God in few. This town hath been advised upon of purpose for me; it consisteth of Papists, or

[1] To feel reluctance, especially from some pettish humor.

[2] Fondling, making much of.

[3] A bond given by one who has received a previous bond, engaging that the person who gave the previous bond shall not, in consequence of it, come to any loss or damage.

[4] Slope, declivity.

men of Gallio's noughty[1] faith. It is counted wisdom, in the most, not to countenance a confined minister! but I find Christ neither strange nor unkind; for I have found many faces smile upon me since I came hither.

I am heavy and sad, considering what is betwixt the Lord and my soul, which none seeth but he. I find men have mistaken me; it would be no art (as I now see) to spin small,[2] and make hypocrisy seem a goodly web, and go through the market as a saint among men, and yet steal quietly to Hell, without observation; so easy is it to deceive men. I have disputed whether or no I ever knew anything of Christianity, save the letters of that name. Men see but as men, and they call ten twenty, and twenty a hundred; but, oh! to be approved of God in the heart and in sincerity, is not an ordinary mercy. My neglects while I had a pulpit, and other things whereof I am ashamed to speak, meet me now, so as God maketh an honest cross my daily sorrow; and, for fear of scandal and stumbling, I must hide this day of the law's pleading: I know not if this court, kept within my soul, be fenced[3] in Christ's name. If certainty of salvation were to be bought, God knoweth that if I had ten earths, I would not prig[4] with God. Like a fool, I believed, under sufferings for Christ, that I myself should keep the key of Christ's treasures, and take out comforts when I listed, and eat, and be fat; but I see now that a sufferer for Christ shall be made to know himself, and shall be holden at the door, as well as another poor sinner; and will be fain to eat with the bairns and take the by-board,[5] and glad to do so. My blessing on the cross of Christ, that hath made me to see this. Oh, if[6] we could take pains for the Kingdom of Heaven! But we sit down upon some ordinary marks of God's children, thinking we have as much as will separate us from a reprobate, and thereupon we take the play, and cry "Holiday;" and thus the Devil casteth water on our fire, and blunteth our zeal and care. But I see that Heaven is not at the next door; and I see that, howbeit my challenges[7] be many, I suffer for Christ and dare hazard my salvation upon it; for sometimes my Lord cometh with a fair hour, and, oh! but his love is sweet, delightful, and comfortable! Half a kiss is sweet: but our doting love will not be content with a right to Christ, unless we get possession; like the man who will not be content with rights[8] to bought land, except he get also the ridges and acres laid upon his back, to carry home with him. However it be, Christ is wise; and we are fools to be browden[9] and fond of a pawn in the loof[10] of our hand: living on trust by faith may well content us. Madam, I know that your Ladyship knoweth this, and that made me bold to write of it, that others might reap somewhat by my bonds for the truth; for I would desire, and aim at

1 Having nothing in it.
2 Fine.
3 *To fence*, to open a court by proclaiming the principles on which it is constituted.
4 Higgle, chaffer.
5 Side-table.
6 Oh, that.
7 Self-accusations.
8 Title-deeds.
9 Unreasonably, and somewhat childishly intent upon a thing.
10 The palm of the hand.

this, to have my Lord well-spoken of and honored, howbeit he should make nothing of me but a bridge over a water.

Thus recommending your Ladyship, your son and children, to His grace, who hath honored you with a name and room among the living in Jerusalem; and wishing grace to be with your Ladyship, I rest,

Your Ladyship's in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXII.

TO MR. DAVID DICKSON.

Reverend, and Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you—I find that great men, especially old friends, scaur[1] to speak for me; but my kingly and royal Master biddeth me to try his moyen[2] to the uttermost, and I shall find a friend at hand. I still depend upon Him; His court is as before; the prisoner is welcome to Him; the black, crabbed tree of my Lord's cross hath made Christ and my soul very entire;[3] He is my song in the night. I am often laid in the dust with challenges,[4] and apprehensions of His anger, and then, if a mountain of iron were laid upon me, I cannot be heavier; and with much wrestling I win[5] into the king's house-of-wine, and then, for the most part, my life is joy, and such joy through his comforts, as I have been afraid lest I should shame myself and cry out, for I can scarce bear what I get. Christ giveth me a measure heaped up, pressed down, and running over; and, believe it, his love paineth more than prison and banishment. I cannot get the way of Christ's love. Had I known what He was keeping for me, I should never have been so faint-hearted. In my heaviest times, when all is lost, the memory of His love maketh me think Christ's glooms[6] are but for the fashion.[7] I seek no more than a vent to my wine; I am smothered and ready to burst for want of vent. Think not much of persecution. It is before you; but it is not as men conceive of it; my sugared cross forceth me to say this to you, ye shall have waled[8] meat—the sick bairn is ofttimes the spilled[9] bairn—ye shall command all the house. I hope that ye help a tired prisoner to praise and pray. Had I but the annual of annual[10] to give to my Lord Jesus, it would ease my pain. But, alas! I have nothing to pay, he will get nothing of poor me; but I am wo[11] that I have not room enough in my heart for such a stranger. I am not cast down to go farther north. I have good cause to work for my Mas-

[1] Boggle. [2] Interest.
[3] That is, hath united them in most intimate acquaintance and friendship.
[4] Self-accusations. [5] Get. [6] Frowns.
[7] For the customary appearance. [8] Carefully selected.
[9] Spoiled. [10] Quit-rent of quit-rent, that is, the smallest sum.
[11] Grieved.

ter, for I am well-paid before-hand; I am not behind, howbeit I should get one smile more, till my feet be up within the King's dining-hall.

I have gone through yours upon the Covenant; it hath edified my soul, and refreshed a hungry man. I judge it sharp, sweet, quick, and profound. Take me at my word, I fear that it get no lodging in Scotland.

The brethren of Ireland write not to me—chide with them for that. I am sure that I may give you and them a commission, (and I will abide by it,) that you tell my Beloved that I am sick of love. I hope in God to leave some of my rust and superfluities in Aberdeen. I cannot get a house in this town wherein to leave drink-silver[1] in my Master's name, save one only: there is no sale for Christ in the north; he is like to lye long on my hand, ere any accept him.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXIII.

TO MR. MATTHEW MOWAT.

Reverend, and Dear Brother,—I am a very far mistaken man. If others knew how poor my stock was, they would not think upon the like of me but with compassion; for I am as one kept under a strict tutor; I would have more than my tutor alloweth me, but it is good that a bairn's wit is not the rule which regulateth my Lord Jesus. Let him give what he will, it shall aye be above merit, and my ability to gain therewith. I would not wish a better stock, whill Heaven be my stock, than to live upon credit at Christ's hands, daily borrowing. Surely, running-over love, that vast, huge, boundless love of Christ, (that there is telling in for man and angels,) is the only thing I most fain would be in hands with. He knoweth that I have little but the love of that love; and that I shall be happy, suppose I never get another heaven, but only an eternal, lasting feast of that love. But suppose my wishes were poor, he is not poor; Christ, all the seasons of the year, is dropping sweetness. If I had vessels, I might fill them, but my old, riven, and running-out dish, even when I am at the well, can bring little away. Nothing but glory will make tight and fast our leaking and rifty[2] vessels. Alas! I have skailed[3] more of Christ's grace, love, faith, humility, and godly sorrow than I have brought with me. How little of the sea can a child carry in his hand! as little dow[4] I take way of my great Sea, my boundless and running-over Christ Jesus.

[1] Drink money. Rutherford means that he could not find any house, save only one, in which he could leave, on his departure from it, any expression or token of his regard for Christ. [2] Full of rifts or rents. [3] Spilled, scattered. [4] Am able to.

I have not lighted upon the right gate[1] of putting Christ to the bank, and making myself rich with him: my misguiding and childish trafficking with that matchless Pearl, that Heaven's Jewel, the Jewel of the Father's delights, hath put me to a great loss. Oh, that he would take a loan of me, and my stock, and put his name in all my bonds, and serve himself heir to the poor mean portion which I have, and be accountable for the talent himself! Gladly would I put Christ into my room, to guide all; and let me be but a servant to run errands, and act by his direction—let me be his interdicted heir. Lord Jesus work upon my minority, and let him win a pupil's blessing. Oh, how would I rejoice to have this work of my salvation legally fastened upon Christ! A back-bond[2] of my Lord Jesus that it should be forthcoming[3] to the orphan, would be my happiness: dependency on Christ were my surest way; if Christ were my foundation I were sure enough. I thought the guiding of grace had been no art;[4] I thought it would come of will;[5] but I would spill[6] my own heaven yet, if I had not burdened Christ with all. I but lend my bare name to the sweet covenant; Christ, behind and before, and on either side, maketh all sure. God will not take an Arminian cautioner.[7] Free-will, a weather-cock, turning at a serpent's tongue, a tutor that cowped[8] our father, Adam, unto us; and brought down the house, and sold the land; and sent the father, the mother, and all the bairns through the earth, to beg their bread: nature in the Gospel, hath but cracked a credit. Oh, well to my poor soul for evermore, that my Lord called grace to the council, and put Christ Jesus with free merits, and the blood of God foremost in the chase, to draw sinners after a Ransomer! Oh, what a sweet block[9] was it, by way of buying and selling, to give, and tell down a ransom for grace and glory to dyvours![10] Oh, would to my Lord that I could cause paper and ink to speak the worth and excellency, the high and loud praises of a Brother-ransomer! The Ransomer needeth not my report; but oh, if he would take it, and make use of it! I should be happy, if I had an errand to this world, but for some few years, to spread proclamations and outcries, and love-letters, of the highness, the highness for evermore, the glory, the glory for evermore, of the Ransomer, whose clothes were wet and dyed in blood; albeit, after I had done that, my soul and body should go back to the mother. Nothing that their Creator brought them once out from, as from their Beginning. But why should I pine away, and pain myself with wishes; and not believe rather, that Christ will hire such an outcast as I am, a masterless body,[11] put out of the house by the sons of my mother, and give me em-

[1] Way, manner.

[2] A bond, given by one who has received a previous bond, engaging that the person who gave the previous bond shall not, in consequence of it, come to any loss or damage.

[3] Producible.

[4] That is, required no skill.

[5] Spontaneously.

[6] Spoil, ruin.

[7] Surety.

[8] Overturned, upset.

[9] Plan, or scheme of a bargain.

[10] Bankrupts.

[11] A servant whom no master will hire.

ployment and a calling, one way or other, to set out Christ and his wares to country buyers, and purpose Christ unto, and press him upon some poor souls, that fainer than their life would receive him?

You complain heavily of your short-coming in practice, and venturing on suffering for Christ: you have many marrows.[1] For the first, I would not put you off a sense of wretchedness. Hold on! Christ never yet slew a sighing, groaning child: more of that would make you won goods, and a meet prey for Christ. Alas! I have too little of it, for venturing on suffering. I had not so much free gear,[2] when I came to Christ's camp as to buy a sword—a wonder that Christ should not laugh at such a soldier. I am no better yet; but faith liveth and spendeth upon our Captain's charges, who is able to pay for all: we need not pity him, he is rich enough. Ye desire me also not to mistake Christ under a mask. I bless you, and thank God for it: but alas! masked, or bare-faced, kissing or glooming,[3] I mistake him: yea, I mistake him farthest when the mask is off; for then I play me with his sweetness. I am like a child, that hath a gilded book, that playeth with the ribbons, and the gilding, and the picture on the first page, but readeth not the contents of it. Certainly if my desires to my Well-beloved were fulfilled, I could provoke devils, and crosses, and the world, and temptations to the field; but, oh! my poor weakness maketh me lye behind the bush and hide me.

Remember my service and my blessing to my Lord. I am mindful of him as I am able. Desire him from a prisoner, to come and visit my good Master, and feel but the smell of his love. It setteth[4] him well, howbeit he be young, to make Christ his garland. I could not wish him in a better case, than in a fever of love-sickness for Christ.

Remember my bonds. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXXIV.

TO WILLIAM HALLIDAY.

Loving Friend,—I received your letter. I wish that ye take pains for salvation. Mistaken grace, and somewhat like conversion which is not conversion, is the saddest and most doleful thing in the world. Make sure of salvation, and lay the foundation sure, for many are beguiled. Put a low price upon the world's clay; put a high price upon Christ. Temptations will come, but if they be not made welcome by you, ye have the best of it. Be jealous over yourself and your own heart, and keep touches[5] with God.

[1] Equals, companions. [2] Money. [3] Frowning.
[4] Becomes. [5] Keep faith.

Let him not have a faint and feeble soldier of you. Fear not to back Christ, for he will conquer and overcome. Let no man scaur[1] at Christ, for I have no quarrels at his cross; he and his cross are two good guests, and worth the lodging. Men would fain have Christ good-cheap,[2] but the market will not come down. Acquaint yourself with prayer. Make Christ your Captain and your armor. Make conscience of sinning when no eye seeth you. Grace be with you.

Yours, in Christ Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXV.

TO A GENTLEWOMAN, AFTER THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

DEAR, AND LOVING SISTER,—I know that ye are minding your sweet country, and not taking your inn (the place of your banishment) for your home. This life is not worthy to be the thatch or outer wall of the paradise of your Lord Jesus, that he did sweat for to you, and that he keepeth for you. Short, and silly, and sand-blind were our hope, if it could not look over the water to our best heritage, and if it stayed only at home about the doors of our clay house.

I marvel not, my dear sister, that ye complain that ye come short of your old wrestlings, which ye had for a blessing, and that now ye find it not so. Bairns are but hired to learn their lesson, when they first go to school: and it is enough that these who run a race see the gold only at the starting-place; and possibly they see little more of it, or nothing at all till they win[3] to the rinks-end,[4] and get the gold in the loof[5] of their hand. Our Lord maketh delicates and dainties of his sweet presence and love-visits to his own; but Christ's love, under a veil, is love. If ye get Christ, howbeit not the sweet and pleasant way ye would have him, it is enough; for the Well-beloved cometh not our way; he must wale[6] his own gate[7] himself. For worldly things, seeing they are meadows and fair flowers in your way to Heaven, a smell in the by-going[8] is sufficient. He that would reckon and tell all the stones in his way, in a journey of three or four hundred miles, and write up in his count-book[9] all the herbs and the flowers growing in his way, might come short of his journey. You cannot stay, in your inch of time, to lose your day, (seeing that you are in haste; and the night, and your afternoon will not bide[10] you,) in setting your heart on this vain world. It were your wisdom to read your account-book, and to have in readiness your business, against the

1 Boggle.
2 Gratuitously. Rutherford means without any trials or tribulations.
3 Get. 4 End of the course. 5 The palm.
6 Choose, select. 7 Way. 8 Passing.
9 That is, his diary or journal. 10 Wait for.

time you come to death's water-side. I know that your lodging is taken; your forerunner, Christ, hath not forgotten that; and, therefore, you must set yourself to your "one thing," which you cannot well want.

In that our Lord took your husband to himself, I know it was that he might make room for himself. He cutteth off your love to the creature, that ye might learn that God only is the right owner of your love, sorrow, loss, sadness, death, or the worst things that are, except sin. But Christ knoweth well what to make of them, and can put his own in the cross's common,[1] that we shall be obliged to affliction, and thank God, who taught us to make our acquaintance with such a rough companion, who can hale us to Christ. You must learn to make your evils your great good; and to spin comforts, peace, joy, communion with Christ, out of your troubles, that are Christ's wooers, sent to speak for[2] you to himself. It is easy to get good words, and a comfortable message from our Lord, even from such rough serjeants, as divers temptations. Thanks to God for crosses! When we count and reckon our losses in seeking God, we find that godliness is great gain. Great partners of a shipful of gold are glad to see the ship come to the harbor;—surely we and our Lord Jesus together, have a shipful of gold coming home, and our gold is in that ship. Some are so in love, or rather in lust, with this life, that they sell their part of the ship for a little thing. I would counsel you to buy hope, but sell it not, and give not away your crosses for nothing; the inside of Christ's cross is white and joyful, and the far-end[3] of the black cross is a fair and glorious heaven of ease: and seeing Christ hath fastened Heaven to the far-end[3] of the cross, and he will not loose the knot himself, and none else can, (for when Christ casteth[4] a knot, all the world cannot loose it:) let us then count it exceeding joy, when we fall into divers temptations.

Thus recommending you to the tender mercy, and grace of our Lord, I rest,

Your loving brother, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXVI.

TO JOHN GORDON OF CARDONESS, YOUNGER.

Honored, and Dear Brother,—I wrote of late to you. Multitudes of letters burden me now. I am refreshed with your letter.

I exhort you in the bowels of Christ, set to work for your soul, and let these bear weight with you, and ponder them seriously: 1st, Weeping and gnashing of teeth in utter darkness or Heaven's joy. 2ndly, Think what ye would give for an hour, when ye

[1] That is, Christ can so place himself under, or connect himself with, the cross, as that we shall be obliged or indebted to the cross for our being brought to him.
[2] To bespeak. [3] Farthest end. [4] Tieth.

shall lye like dead, cold, blackened clay. 3rdly, There is sand in your glass yet, and your sun is not gone down. 4thly, Consider what joy and peace are in Christ's service. 5thly, Think what advantage it will be, to have angels, the world, life and death, crosses, yea, and devils, all for you, as the King's serjeants and servants, to do your business. 6thly, To have mercy on your seed, and a blessing on your house. 7thly, To have true honor, and a name on earth that casteth a sweet smell. 8thly, How ye will rejoice when Christ layeth down your head under his chin, and betwixt his breasts, and drieth your face, and welcometh you to glory and happiness. 9thly, Imagine what pain and torture is a guilty conscience; what slavery to carry the Devil's dishonest loads. 10thly, Sin's joys are but night-dreams, thoughts, vapors, imaginations, and shadows. 11thly, What dignity it is to be a son of God. 12thly, Dominion and mastery over temptations, over the world and sin. 13thly, That your enemies should be the tail and you the head.

For your bairns, now at rest, I speak to you and your wife, (and cause her to read this.) 1st, I am a witness for Barbara's glory in Heaven. 2ndly, For the rest, I write it under my hand, there are days coming on Scotland, when barren wombs, and dry breasts, and childless parents shall be pronounced blessed—they are then, in the lee of the harbor, ere the storm come on. 3rdly, They are not lost to you, that are laid up in Christ's treasury in Heaven. 4thly, At the Resurrection, ye shall meet with them; thither they are sent before, but not sent away. 5thly, Your Lord loveth you, who is homely[1] to take and give, borrow and lend.[2] 6thly, Let not bairns be your idols; for God will be jealous,and take away the idol, because he is greedy of your love wholly.

I bless you, your wife and children. Grace for evermore be with you.

Your loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXVII.

TO JOHN GORDON OF CARDONESS, ELDER.

HONORABLE, AND DEAREST IN THE LORD,—Your letter hath refreshed my soul. My joy is fulfilled, if Christ and ye be fast together. Ye are my joy and crown. Ye know that I have recommended his love to you. I defy the world, Satan, and sin. His love hath neither brim, nor bottom in it. My dearest in Christ, I write my soul's desire to you. Heaven is not at the next door. I find Christianity to be a hard task: set to it in your evening. We would all keep both Christ and our right eye, our

[1] Affable, condescending.
[2] *To borrow or lend*, to be on the most intimate and familiar terms.

right hand and foot; but it will not do with us. I beseech you, by the mercies of God, and your compearance[1] before Christ, look Christ's account-book and your own together, and collate them. Give the remnant of your time to your soul. This great idol-god, the world, will be lying in white ashes, on the day of your compearance;[1] and why should night-dreams, and day-shadows, and water-froth, and May-flowers run away with your heart? When we win to[2] the water-side, and black death's river-brink, and put our foot into the boat, we shall laugh at our folly. Sir, I recommend unto you the thoughts of death, and how ye would wish your soul to be, when ye shall lye cold, blue, ill-smelling clay.

For any hireling to be intruded, I, being the King's prisoner, cannot say much; but as God's minister, I desire you to read Acts i. 15, 16, to the end, and Acts vi. 2, 3, 4, 5, and ye shall find that God's people should have a voice in choosing church-rulers and teachers. I shall be sorry, if willingly ye shall give way to his unlawful intrusion upon my labors. The only wise God direct you.

God's grace be with you.

Your loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXVIII.

TO THE LADY FORRET.

Worthy Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you—I long to hear from you. I hear Christ hath been that[3] kind as to visit you with sickness, and to bring you to the door of the grave: but ye found the door shut, blessed be his glorious name! whill[4] ye be riper for eternity. He will have more service of you: and, therefore, he seeketh of you, that henceforth ye be honest to your new Husband, the Son of God. We have all idol-love, and are whorishly inclined to love other things beside our Lord, and, therefore, our Lord hunteth for our love moe ways than one or two. Oh that Christ had his own of us! I know he will not want you, and that is a sweet wilfulness in his love; and ye have as good cause, on the other part, to be headstrong and peremptory in your love to Christ, and not to part, nor divide your love betwixt him and the world—if it were more, it is little enough, yea, too little for Christ.

I am now, every way, in good terms with Christ. He hath set a banished prisoner as a seal on his heart, and as a bracelet on his arm: that crabbed and black tree of the cross laugheth upon me now; the alarming noise of the cross is worse than itself. I love Christ's glooms[5] better than the world's worm-eaten joys. Oh, if[6] all the kingdom were as I am, except these bonds! My

[1] Appearance in obedience to legal citation. [2] Reach.
[3] So. [4] Until. [5] Frowns. [6] Oh, that.

loss is gain; my sadness joyful; my bonds, liberty; my tears comfortable. This world is not worth a drink of cold water. Oh, but Christ's love casteth a great heat! Hell, and all the salt sea, and the rivers of the earth, cannot quench it.

I remember you to God; ye have the prayers of a prisoner of Christ. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 9, 1637.

LETTER CXXIX.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Loving, and Dear Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Your letter hath refreshed my soul. You shall not have my advice to make haste to go out of that town; for if you remove out of Kirkcudbright, they will easily undo all. You are at God's work, and in his way there: be strong in the Lord; the Devil is weaker than you are, because stronger is He that is in you than he that is in the world. Your care of, and love showed towards me, now a prisoner of Christ, is laid up for you in Heaven, and you shall know, that it is come up in remembrance before God.

Pray, pray for my desolate flock, and give them your counsel, when you meet with any of them. It shall be my grief to hear that a wolf enter in upon my labors; but if the Lord permit it, I must be silent. My sky shall clear, for Christ layeth my head in his bosom, and admitteth me to lean there. I never knew before what his love was in such a measure. If he leave me, he leaveth me in pain, and sick of love; and yet my sickness is my life and health. I have a fire within me; I defy all the devils in Hell, and all the prelates in Scotland, to cast water on it.

I rejoice at your courage and faith. Pray still as if I were on my journey to come and be your pastor. What iron-gates or bars are able to stand it out against Christ? for when he bloweth, they open to him.

I remember your husband. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 11, 1637.

LETTER CXXX.

TO JOHN CARSEN.

My Well-beloved, and Dear Friend,—Every one seeketh not God; and far fewer find him, because they seek amiss. He

is to be sought for, above all things, if men would find what they seek. Let feathers and shadows alone to children, and go seek your Well-beloved. Your only errand to the world, is to woo Christ: therefore, put other lovers from about his house, and let Christ have all your love, without minching[1] or dividing it—it is little enough, if there were more of it. The serving of the world and sin hath but a base reward; and smoke instead of pleasures, and but a night-dream for true ease to the soul. Go where ye will, your soul shall not sleep sound but in Christ's bosom. Come in to him, and lie down, and rest you on the slain Son of God, and inquire for him. I sought him, and now, a fig for all the worm-eaten pleasures, and moth-eaten glory out of Heaven, since I have found him, and in him all I can want or wish! He hath made me a king over the world. Princes cannot overcome me. Christ hath given me the marriage-kiss, and he hath my marriage-love: we have made up a full bargain, that shall not go back on either side. Oh, if[2] ye, and all in that country, knew what sweet terms of mercy are betwixt him and me!

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 11, 1637.

LETTER CXXXI.

TO MY LADY BOYD.

MADAM,—I would have written to your Ladyship ere now, but people's believing there is in me that which I know there is not hath put me out of love with writing to any; for it is easy to put religion to a market and public fair, but alas! it is not so soon made eye-sweet[3] for Christ.

My Lord seeth me a tired man far behind. I have gotten much love from Christ, but I give him little or none again. My white side cometh out on paper to men; but at home and within, I find much black work, and great cause of a low sail, and of little boasting; and yet howbeit I see challenges[4] to be true, the manner of the Tempter's pressing of them is unhonest, and, in my thoughts, knavish-like.[6] My peace is, that Christ may find outing[7] and sale of his wares in the like of me, I mean, for saving grace.

I wish all professors to fall in love with grace. All our songs should be of his free grace. We are but too lazy and careless in seeking of it; it is all our riches we have here, and glory in the bud. I wish that I could set out free grace. I was the Law's man, and under the Law, and under a curse; but grace brought me from under that hard lord, and I rejoice that I am grace's free-holder. I pay tribute to none for Heaven, seeing my land and

[1] Mincing. [2] Oh, that. [3] Pleasant to the eye.
[4] Accusations. [5] Not fair.
[6] Having the appearance of being knavish. [7] Display.

heritage holdeth of Christ, my new King. Infinite wisdom hath devised this excellent way of free-holding for sinners. It is a better way to heaven than the old way that was in Adam's days. It hath this fair advantage, that no man's emptiness and want layeth an inhibition upon Christ, or hindereth his salvation; (and that is far best for me,) but our new Landlord putteth the names of dyvours,[1] and Adam's forlorn heirs, and beggars, and the crooked[2] and blind, in the free charters. Heaven, and angels may wonder that we have got such a gate[3] of sin and Hell. Such a back-entry out of Hell, as Christ made, and brought out the captives by, is more than my poor shallow thoughts can comprehend. I would think sufferings glory, (and I am sometimes not far from it,) if my Lord would give me a new alms of free grace.

I hear that the prelates are intending banishment for me; but for more grace, and no other hire, I would make it welcome. The bits of this clay-house, the earth, and the other side of the sea, are my Father's. If my sweet Lord Jesus would bud[4] my sufferings with a new measure of grace, I were a rich man; but I have not now, of a long time, found such high spring-tides as formerly. The sea is out, and the wind of his Spirit calm; and I cannot buy a wind, or, by requesting the sea, cause it to flow again; only, I wait on, upon the banks and shore-side, till the Lord send a full sea, that with up-sails I may lift up Christ. Yet sorrow for his absence is sweet; and sighs, with "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?" have their own delights. Oh, that I may gather hunger against his long-looked-for return! Well were my soul, if Christ were the element, mine own element, and that I loved and breathed in him, and if I could not live without him. I allow not laughter upon myself, when he is away; yet he never leaveth the house, but he leaveth drink-money behind him, and a pawn that he will return. Wo, wo to me, if he should go away, and take all his flitting[5] with him! Even to dream of him is sweet. To build a house of pining wishes for his return, to spin out a web of sorrow, and care, and languishing, and sighs, either dry or wet, as they may be, because he hath no leisure, (if I may speak so,) to make a visit, or to see a poor friend, sweeteneth and refresheth the thoughts of the heart. A misty dew will stand for rain, and do some good, and keep some greenness in the herbs, till our Lord's clouds rue upon the earth, and send down a watering of rain. Truly I think Christ's misty dew a welcome message from heaven, till my Lord's rain fall.

Wo, wo is me for the Lord's vineyard in Scotland. Howbeit the Father of the house embrace a child, and feed him, and kiss him; yet it is sorrow and sadness to the children, that our poor Mother hath gotten her leave,[6] and that our Father hath given up house. It is an unheartsome[7] thing, to see our Father and Mother agree so ill; yet the bastards, if they be fed, care not. O Lord, cast not

[1] Bankrupts. [2] Halt. [3] Way. [4] Bribe.
[5] Goods which may be removed from one residence to another.
[6] Discharge. [7] Unseemly and melancholy.

water on Scotland's smoaking coal. It is a strange gate the saints go to Heaven. Our enemies often eat[1] and drink us, and we go to Heaven through their bellies and stomachs, and they vomit the church of God, undigested among their hands: and even while we are shut up in prisons by them, we advance in our journey.

Remember my service to my Lord your kind son, who was kind to me in my bonds, and was not ashamed to own me. I would be glad that Christ got the morning-service of his life, now in his young years; it would suit him well to give Christ his young and green love. Christ's stamp and seal would go far down in a young soul, if he would receive the thrust of Christ's stamp. I would desire him to make search for Christ; for nobles now are but dry friends to Christ.

The grace of God our Father, and the good-will of Him who dwelt in the bush, be with your Ladyship.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXXXII.

TO THE EARL OF CASSILLIS.

My very Noble, and Honorable Lord,—I make bold, (out of the honorable and Christian report I hear of your Lordship, having no other thing to say, but that which concerneth the honorable cause which the Lord hath enabled your Lordship to profess,) to write this, that it is your Lordship's crown, your glory, and your honor, to set your shoulder under the Lord's glory, now falling to the ground, and to back Christ now, when so many think it wisdom to let him fend for[2] himself. The shields of the earth ever did, and do still believe that Christ is a cumbersome neighbor, and that it is a pain to hold up his yeas and nays. They fear that he take their chariots, and their crowns, and their honor from them; but my Lord standeth in need of none of them all. But it is your glory to own Christ and his buried truth; for, let men say what they please, the plea with Zion's enemies, in this day of Jacob's trouble, is, If Christ should be King, and no mouth speak laws but his? It concerneth the apple of Christ's eye, and his royal privileges, what is now debated; and Christ's kingly honor is come to yea and nay. But let me be pardoned, my dear, and noble Lord, when I beseech you by the mercies of God, by the comfort of the Spirit, by the wounds of your dear Saviour, by your compearance[3] before the Judge of quick and dead, to stand for Christ, and to back him. Oh, if the nobles had done their part, and been zealous for the Lord! it had not been as it is now; but men think it wisdom to stand beside Christ till his head be broken, and sing dumb.[4] There is a time coming when Christ will have

[1] Ps. xiv. 4.
[2] Make a shift for.
[3] Appearance in a court of law.
[4] Be silent.

a thick[1] court, and he will be the glory of Scotland; and he will make a diadem, a garland, a seal upon his heart, and a ring upon his finger, of those who have avouched him before this faithless generation:—howbeit, ere that come, wrath from the Lord is ordained for this land.

My Lord, I have cause to write this to your Lordship, for I dare not conceal his kindness to the soul of an afflicted, exiled prisoner. Who hath more cause to boast in the Lord than such a sinner as I, who am feasted with the consolations of Christ, and have no pain in my sufferings, but the pain of soul-sickness of love for Christ, and sorrow that I cannot help to sound aloud the praises of Him who hath heard the sighing of the prisoner, and is content to lay the head of his oppressed servant in his bosom, under his chin, and let him feel the smell of his garments? It behooved me to write this, that your Lordship might know that Christ is as good as he is called; and to testify to your Lordship that the cause, which your Lordship now professeth before the faithless world, is Christ's, and that your Lordship shall have no shame of it.

Grace be with you.

Your Lordship's obliged servant, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXXXIII.

TO ROBERT GORDON, BAILLIE OF AYR.

Worthy Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to hear from you on paper. Remember your Chief's[2] speeches on his death-bed. I pray you, sir, sell all, and buy the pearl: time will cut you from this world's glory. Look what will do you good, when your glass shall be run out, and let Christ's love bear most court in your soul, and that court will bear down the love of other things. Christ seeketh your help in your place, give him your hand. Who hath more cause to encourage others to own Christ than I have? for he hath made me sick of love, and left me in pain to wrestle with his love, and love is like to fall aswoon[3] through his absence:—I mean not that he deserteth me, or that I am ebb[4] of comforts; but this is an unco[5] pain. Oh that I had a heart and a love to render to him back again! Oh, if[6] principalities and powers, thrones and dominions, and all the world would help me to praise! Praise him in my behalf.

Remember my love to your wife. I thank you most kindly for your love to my brother. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

[1] Thronged, crowded.
[2] Kenmure.
[3] Into a swoon.
[4] Shallow.
[5] Excessive.
[6] Oh, that.

LETTER CXXXIV.

TO JOHN KENNEDY, BAILLIE OF AYR.

GRACE, mercy, and peace be to you.—Your not writing to me cannot bind me up from remembering you now and then, that at least ye may be a witness and a third man to behold on paper what is betwixt Christ and me. I was in his eyes like a young orphan, wanting known parents, casten out in the open fields: either Christ behooved to take me up, and to bring me home to his house and fire-side, else I had died in the fields; and now I am homely [1] with Christ's love, so that I think the house mine own, and the Master of the house mine also. Christ inquired not, when he began to love me, whether I was fair, or black, or sun-burnt!—love taketh what it may have. He loved me before this time, I know; but now I have the flower of his love: his love is come to a fair bloom,[2] like a young rose opened up out of the green leaves, and it casteth a strong and fragrant smell. I want nothing but ways of expressing Christ's love. A full vessel would have a vent. Oh, if[3] I could smoke out, and cast out coals, to make a fire in many breasts of this land! Oh! it is a pity that there were not many imprisoned for Christ, were it for no other purpose than to write books and love-songs of the love of Christ.

This love would keep all created tongues of men and angels in exercise, and busy night and day, to speak of it. Alas! I can speak nothing of it, but wonder at three things in his love:—First, freedom. Oh, that lumps of sin should get such love for nothing! Secondly, The sweetness of his love. I give over either to speak or write of it; but those that feel it, may better bear witness what it is: but it is so sweet, that, next to Christ himself, nothing can match it. Nay, I think that a soul could live eternally blessed only on Christ's love, and feed upon no other thing: yea, when Christ in love giveth a blow, it doeth a soul good; and it is a kind of comfort and joy to it, to get a cuff with the lovely, sweet, and soft hand of Jesus. And, thirdly, What power and strength are in his love! I am persuaded it can climb a steep hill, with hell upon its back; and swim through water and not drown; and sing in the fire, and find no pain; and triumph in losses, prisons, sorrows, exile, disgrace, and laugh and rejoice in death. Oh, for a year's lease of the sense of his love, without a cloud, to try what Christ is! Oh, for the coming of the Bridegroom! Oh, when shall I see the Bridegroom and the bride meet in the clouds, and kiss each other! Oh, when will we get our day, and our heart's-fill of that love! Oh, if[3] it were lawful to complain of the famine of that love, and want of the immediate vision of God! O time, time! how dost thou torment the souls of those that would be swallowed up of Christ's love, because thou movest so slowly! Oh,

[1] At home. [2] Blossom. [3] Oh, that.

if[1] he would pity a poor prisoner, and blow love upon me, and give a prisoner a taste or draught of that sweetness, (which is glory as it were begun,) to be a confirmation, that Christ and I shall have our fill of each other forever! Come hither, O Love of Christ, that I may once kiss thee before I die! What would I not give to have time, that lyeth betwixt Christ and me, taken out of the way, that we might once meet? I cannot think but that at the first sight I shall see of that most lovely and fairest face, love will come out of his two eyes, and fill me with astonishment. I would but desire to stand at the outer side of the gates of the new Jerusalem, and look through a hole of the door, and see Christ's face. A borrowed vision in this life would be my borrowed and begun heaven, whill the long, long-looked-for day dawn. It is not for nothing that it is said, (Col. i. 27,) "Christ in you the hope of glory." I will be content of no pawn of Heaven but Christ himself; for Christ, possessed by faith here, is young heaven and glory in the bud. If I had that pawn I would bide horning[2] and Hell both, ere I give it again. All that we have here, is scarce the picture of glory. Should not we young bairns long and look for the expiring of our minority? It were good to be daily begging propines[3] and love-gifts, and the bridegroom's favors; and, if we can do no more, to seek crumbs, and hungry dinners of Christ's love, to keep the taste of Heaven in our mouth, whill supper-time. I know it is far after noon, and nigh the marriage-supper of the Lamb:—the table is covered already. O well-beloved, run, run fast! O fair day, when wilt thou dawn! O shadows, flee away! I think hope and love woven through other[4] make our absence from Christ spiritual torment. It is a pain to wait on, but hope that maketh not ashamed swalloweth up that pain. It is not unkindness that keepeth Christ and us so long asunder. What can I say to Christ's love? I think more than I can say. To consider, that when my Lord Jesus may take the air, (if I may so speak,) and go abroad, yet he will be confined and keep the prison with me! But in all this sweet communion with him, what am I to be thanked for? I am but a sufferer. Whether I will or not, he will be kind to me—as if he had defied my guiltiness to make him unkind, he so beareth his love in on me. Here I die with wondering, that justice hindereth not love; for there are none in Hell, nor out of Hell, more unworthy of Christ's love. Shame may confound and scaur[5] me once to hold up my black mouth to receive one of Christ's undeserved kisses. If my inner-side were turned out, and all men saw my vileness,

[1] Oh, that.

[2] A letter issued from his majesty's signet, and directed to a messenger, who is required to charge a debtor to pay the debt for which he is prosecuted under pain of rebellion. This legal process is so called because if the debtor disobey the charge, the messenger, after having proceeded to the market-cross of the head-burgh of the shire where the debtor dwells, there before witnesses cries, "Oyes, oyes, oyes;" then reads the letters, and afterwards, gives three blasts with a horn, by which it is understood that the debtor is denounced as a rebel, and outlawed for disobedience to the king's authority.

[3] Presents. [4] Promiscuously. [5] Frighten.

they would say to me, "It is a shame for thee to stand still, whill Christ kiss thee and embrace thee." It would seem to become me rather to run away from his love, as ashamed at my own unworthiness: nay, I may think shame[1] to take heaven, who have so highly provoked my Lord Jesus; but seeing Christ's love will shame me, I am content to be ashamed. My desire is, that my Lord would give me broader and deeper thoughts, to feed myself with wondering at his love. I would I could weigh it, but I have no balance for it. When I have worn my tongue to the stump, in praising of Christ, I have done nothing to him. I must let him alone, for my withered arms will not go about his high, wide, long, and broad love. What remaineth then, but that my debt to the love of Christ lye unpaid for all eternity? All that are in Heaven are black-shamed[2] with his love as well as I. We must all be dyvours,[3] together; and the blessing of that houseful, or heavenful of dyvours,[3] shall rest forever upon him. Oh, if[4] this land and nation would come and stand beside his inconceivable and glorious perfections, and look in, and love, and adore! Would to God I could bring in many lovers to Christ's house! but this nation hath forsaken the Fountain of living waters. Lord, cast not water on Scotland's coal. Wo, wo will be to this land, because of the day of the Lord's fierce anger, that is so fast coming.

Grace be with you.

Your affectionate brother, in our Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CXXXV.

TO JEAN BROWN.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I am glad that ye go on at Christ's back, in this dark and cloudy time. It were good to sell other things for him; for when all these days are over, we shall find it our advantage, that we have taken part with Christ. I confidently believe that his enemies shall be his footstool, and that he will make green flowers dead, withered hay, when the honor and glory shall fall off them, like the bloom or flower of a green herb shaken with the wind. It were not wisdom for us to think that Christ and the Gospel would come and sit down at our fire-side: nay, but we must go out of our warm houses, and seek Christ and his Gospel. It is not the sunny side of Christ that we must look to, and we must not forsake him for want of that; but must set our face against what may befall us, in following on, till he and we be through the briers and bushes, on the dry ground. Our soft nature would be borne through the troubles of this miserable life, in Christ's arms: and, it is his wis-

[1] Be ashamed.
[2] Utterly put to shame.
[3] Bankrupts.
[4] Oh, that.

dom, who knoweth our mould, that his bairns go wet-shod, and cold-footed to Heaven. Oh, how sweet a thing were it for us to learn to make our burdens light, by framing our hearts to the burden, and making our Lord's will a law!

I find Christ and his cross not so ill[1] to please, nor yet such troublesome guests, as men call them: nay, I think patience should make the water, which Christ giveth us, good wine, and his dross good metal: and we have cause to wait on; for ere it be long, our Master will be at us, and bring this whole world out, before the sun and day-light, in their blacks and whites. Happy are they who are found watching. Our sand-glass is not so long as we need to weary. Time will eat away and root out our woes and sorrow. Our heaven is in the bud, and growing up to a harvest; why then should we not follow on, seeing our span-length of time will come to an inch? Therefore, I commend Christ to you as your last living, and longest living Husband, and the staff of your old age. Let him now have the rest of your days. And think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in; there shall no passenger fall overboard, but the crazed ship and the sea-sick passengers shall come to land safe.

I am in as sweet communion with Christ as a poor sinner can be; and am only pained that he hath much beauty and fairness, and I little love; he great power and mercy, and I little faith; he much light, and I bleared eyes. Oh, that I saw him in the sweetness of his love, and in his marriage-clothes, and were over head and ears in love with that princely One, Christ Jesus my Lord! Alas! my riven dish, and running-out vessel, can hold little of Christ Jesus!

I have joy in this, that I would not refuse death, before I put Christ's lawful heritage in men's trysting;[2] and what know I, if they would have pleased both Christ and me? Alas, that this land hath put Christ to open rouping,[3] and to an "Any man bids more!" Blessed are they who would hold the crown on his head, and buy Christ's honor with his own losses.

I rejoice to hear that your son John is coming to visit Christ, and taste of his love. I hope that he will not lose his pains, nor rue of that choice. I had always, (as I said often to you,) a great love to dear Mr. John Brown, because I thought I saw Christ in him, more than in his brethren. Fain would I write to him, to stand by my sweet Master; and I wish ye would let him read my letter, and the joy I shall have if he will appear for, and side with my Lord Jesus. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

[1] Difficult

[2] That is, Rutherford rejoiced that he would rather choose death than submit Christ's lawful heritage to be decided upon by any meetings of man's appointment.

[3] Auctioning, public sale.

LETTER CXXXVI.

TO JEAN MACMILLAN.

Loving Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I cannot come to you to give you my counsel; and, howbeit I would come, I cannot stay with you; but I beseech you to keep Christ, for I did what I could to put you within grips[1] of him. I told you Christ's testament and latter-will plainly, and I kept nothing back that my Lord gave me; and I gave Christ to you with good will: I pray you to make him your own, and go not from that truth which I taught you in one hair breadth—that truth will save you if ye follow it. Salvation is not an easy thing, and soon gotten. I often told you that few are saved, and many damned: I pray you to make your poor soul sure of salvation, and the seeking of Heaven your daily task. If ye never had a sick night and a pained soul for sin, ye have not yet lighted upon Christ. Look to the right marks of having closed with Christ. If ye love him better than the world, and would quit all the world for him, then that saith the work is sound. Oh, if ye saw the beauty of Jesus, and smelled the fragrance of his love, you would run through fire and water to be at him! God send you him.

Pray for me, for I cannot forget you. Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXXXVII.

TO THE LADY BUSBIE.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am glad to hear that Christ and ye are one, and that ye have made him your "one thing," whereas many are painfully toiled in seeking many things, and their many things are nothing. It is only best that ye set yourself apart as a thing laid up and out of the gate,[2] for Christ alone; for ye are good for no other thing than Christ; and he hath been going about you these many years, by afflictions, to engage you to himself—it were a pity and a loss to say him nay. Verily I could wish that I could swim through Hell; and all the ill weather in the world, and Christ in my arms—but it is my evil and folly, that except Christ come unsent for, I dow not[3] go to seek him: when he and I fall a-reckoning, we are both behind, he in payment,[4] and I in counting; and so marches[5] lie still unred,[6] and accounts uncleared betwixt us. Oh, that he would take his own blood for counts and miscounts,[7] that I might be a

1 Within reach. 2 Out of the way. 3 Am not able.
4 That is, in receiving payment. 5 Boundaries. 6 Unascertained.
7 True and erroneous reckonings.

free man, and none had any claim to me but only, only Jesus. I will think it no bondage to be rouped,[1] comprised,[2] and possessed by Christ as his bondman.

Think well of the visitations of your Lord: for I find one thing, which I saw not well before, that when the saints are under trials, and well humbled, little sins raise great cries, and war-shouts in the conscience; and in prosperity, conscience is a Pope, to give dispensations, and let out and in, and give latitude and elbow-room to our heart. Oh, how little care we for pardon at Christ's hand, when we make dispensations! And all is but bairns' play, till a cross without beget a heavier cross within, and then we play no longer with our idols. It is good still to be severe against ourselves; for we but transform God's mercy into an idol, and an idol that hath a dispensation to give, for the turning of the grace of God into wantonness. Happy are they who take up God, wrath, justice, and sin, as they are in themselves: for we have miscarrying light, that parteth with child, when we have good resolutions: but, God be thanked, that salvation is not rolled upon our wheels.

Oh, but Christ hath a saving eye! salvation is in his eye-lids! When he first looked on me I was saved; it cost him but a look to make Hell quit of me! Oh, but merits, free merits, and the dear blood of God, were the best gate[3] that ever we could have gotten out of Hell! Oh, what a sweet, oh, what a safe and sure way is it, to come out of Hell leaning on a Saviour! That Christ and a sinner should be one, and have Heaven betwixt them, and be halvers of salvation, is the wonder of salvation. What more humble could love be? And what an excellent smell doth Christ cast on his lower garden, where there grow but wild flowers, if we speak by way of comparison; but there is nothing but perfect garden flowers in Heaven, and the best plenishing[4] that is there, is Christ. We are all obliged to love Heaven for Christ's sake. He graceth Heaven, and all his Father's house with his presence. He is a Rose that beautifieth all the Upper Garden of God—a leaf of that rose of God for smell is worth a world. Oh, that he would blow his smell upon a withered and dead soul! Let us, then, go on to meet with him, and to be filled with the sweetness of his love. Nothing will hold him from us. He hath decreed to put time, sin, Hell, devils, men and death out of the way, and to rid the rough way betwixt us and him, that we may enjoy one another. It is strange and wonderful that he would think long[5] in Heaven without us; and that he would have the company of sinners to solace and delight himself withal in Heaven. And now the supper is abiding us. Christ the bridegroom, with desire, is waiting on, till the bride, the Lamb's wife, be busked[6] for the marriage, and the great hall be red[7] for the meeting of that joyful couple. Oh, fools! what do we here? and why sit we still? Why sleep

1 Auctioned.
2 Attached for debt.
3 Way.
4 Furniture.
5 *To think long*, to long.
6 Decked.
7 Cleared.

we in the prison? Were it not best to make us wings to flee up to our blessed Match, our marrow,[1] and our fellow Friend?

I think, mistress, that ye are looking thereaway,[2] and that this is your second or third thought. Make forward, your Guide waiteth on you.

I cannot but bless you for your care and kindness to the saints. God give you to find mercy in that day of our Lord Jesus; to whose saying grace I recommend you.

Yours, in our Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

TO JOHN EWART, BAILLIE OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

MY VERY WORTHY, AND DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot but most kindly thank you for the expressions of your love: your love and respect to me is a great comfort to me.

I bless His high and glorious name, that the terrors of great men have not affrighted me from openly avouching the Son of God; nay, his cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bear; it is such a burden, as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbor. I have not much cause to fall in love with the world: but rather to wish, that He who sitteth upon the floods would bring my broken ship to land, and keep my conscience safe in these dangerous times, for wrath from the Lord is coming on this sinful land.

It were good, that we prisoners of hope know of our strong hold to run to, before the storm come on; therefore, sir, I beseech you by the mercies of God, and comforts of his Spirit, by the blood of your Saviour, and by your compearance[3] before the sin-revenging Judge of the world, keep your garments clean, and stand for the truth of Christ, which ye profess. When the time shall come that your eye-strings shall break, your face wax pale, your breath grow cold, and this house of clay shall totter, and your one foot shall be over the march,[4] in eternity, it will be your comfort and joy, that ye gave your name to Christ. The greatest part of the world think Heaven at the next door, and that Christianity is an easy task; but they will be beguiled. Worthy sir, I beseech you, make sure work of salvation. I have found by experience, that all I could do hath had much ado in the day of my trial; and, therefore, lay up a sure foundation for the time to come.

I cannot requite you, for your undeserved favors to me and my now afflicted brother. But I trust to remember you to God. Remember me heartily to your kind wife.

Yours, in his only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

[1] Partner.
[2] To those parts.
[3] Appearance.
[4] Boundary.

LETTER CXXXIX.

TO WILLIAM FULLERTON, PROVOST OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I am obliged to your love in God.

I beseech you, sir, let nothing be so dear to you as Christ's truth, for salvation is worth all the world; and, therefore, be not afraid of men that shall die. The Lord will do for you in your suffering for him, and will bless your house and seed; and ye have God's promise, that ye shall have his presence in fire, water, and in seven tribulations. Your day shall wear to an end, and your sun go down. In death it will be your joy, that ye have ventured all ye have for Christ; and there is not a promise of Heaven made, but to such as are willing to suffer for it—it is a castle taken by force. This earth is but the clay portion of bastards; and, therefore, no wonder that the world smile on its own; but better things are laid up for his lawfully begotten bairns, whom the world hateth.

I have experience to speak this, for I would not exchange my prison and sad nights, with the court, honor, and ease of my adversaries. My Lord is pleased to make many unknown faces to laugh upon me, and to provide a lodging for me; and he himself visiteth my soul with feasts of spiritual comforts. Oh, how sweet a master is Christ! Blessed are they who lay down all for him.

I thank you kindly for your love to my distressed brother. Ye have the blessing and prayers of the prisoner of Christ to you, your wife and children.

Remember my love and blessing to William and Samuel. I desire them in their youth to seek the Lord, and to fear his great name; to pray twice a-day, at least, to God, and to read God's word; to keep themselves from cursing, lying, and filthy talking.

Now the only wise God, and the presence of the Son of God, be with you all.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXL.

TO ROBERT GLENDINNING.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I thank you most kindly for your care of me, and your love and respective kindness to my brother in his distress. I pray the Lord that ye may find mercy in the day of Christ: and I entreat you, sir, to consider the times which ye live in, and that your soul is more worth to you than the whole world, which in the day of the

blowing of the Last Trumpet, shall lye in white ashes, as an old castle burned to nothing: and remember that judgment and eternity is before you. My dear, and worthy friend, let me entreat you in Christ's name, and by the salvation of your soul, and by your compearance before the dreadful and sin-revenging Judge of the world, to make your accounts ready. Read them ere ye come to the water-side; for your afternoon will wear short, and your sun fall low and go down: and ye know, that this long time your Lord hath waited on you. Oh, how comfortable a thing it will be to you, when time shall be no more, and your soul shall depart out of the house of clay, to vast and endless eternity, to have your soul dressed up, and prepared for your Bridegroom! No loss is comparable to the loss of the soul: there is no hope of regaining that loss. Oh, how joyful would my soul be to hear that ye would start to the gate[1] and contend for the crown, and leave all vanities, and make Christ your garland! Let your soul put away your old lovers, and let Christ have your whole love.

I have some experience to write of this to you. My witness is in Heaven that I would not exchange my chains and bonds for Christ, and my sighs, for ten worlds' glory. I judge this clay idol, which Adam's sons are rouping[2] and selling their souls for, not worth a drink of cold water. Oh if your soul were in my soul's stead, how sick would ye be of love for that fairest One, that Fairest among the sons of men! May-flowers and morning-vapor, and summer-mist posteth not so fast away, as these worm-eaten pleasures which we follow. We build castles in the air, and night-dreams are our daily idols that we dote on. Salvation, salvation is our only necessary thing. Sir, call home your thoughts to this work, to inquire for your Well-beloved. This earth is the portion of bastards; seek the Son's inheritance, and let Christ's truth be dear to you.

I pawnd[3] my salvation on it, that this is the honor of Christ's Kingdom which I now suffer for,—and this world, I hope, shall not come between me and my garland,—and that this is the way to life. When ye and I shall lye lumps of pale clay upon the ground, our pleasures that we now naturally love, shall be less than nothing in that day. Dear brother, fulfil my joy, and betake you to Christ without further delay. Ye will be fain at length to seek him, or do infinitely worse.

Remember my love to your wife. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

[1] *To start to the gate*, to begin with alacrity. [2] Auctioning.
[3] Pledged.

LETTER CXLI.

TO WILLIAM GLENDENNING.

WELL-BELOVED, AND DEAR BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I thank you most kindly for your care and love to me, and in particular to my brother, in his distress in Edinburgh. Go on through your waters without wearying; your Guide knoweth the way, follow him, and cast your cares and temptations upon him; and let not worms, the sons of men, affright you—they shall die, and the moth shall eat them. Keep your garland; there is no less at the stake, in this game betwixt us and the world, than our conscience and salvation: we have need to take heed to the game, and not to yield to them. Let them take other things from us; but here, in matters of conscience, we must hold and draw [1] with kings, and set ourselves in terms of opposition with the shields of the earth. Oh, the sweet communion for evermore, that hath been between Christ and his prisoner! He wearieth not to be kind. He is the fairest sight I see in Aberdeen or in any part that ever my feet were in.

Remember my hearty kindness to your wife. I desire her to believe, and lay her cares on God, and make fast work of salvation. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXLII.

TO MR. HUGH HENDERSON.

MY REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER,—I hear that ye bear the marks of Christ's dying about with you, and that your brethren have cast you out for your Master's sake. Let us wait on till the evening, and till our reckoning in black and white come before our Master. Brother, since we must have a devil to trouble us, I love a raging devil best. Our Lord knoweth what sort of devil we have need of: it is best that Satan be in his own skin, and look like himself; Christ weeping looketh like himself also, with whom Scribes and Pharisees were at yea and nay, and sharp contradiction.

Ye have heard of the patience of Job. When he lay in the ashes, God was with him, clawing and curing his scabs, and letting out his boils, comforting his soul; and he took him up at last. That God is not dead yet: he will stoop and take up fallen bairns; many broken legs since Adam's days hath he spelked,[2] and many weary hearts hath he refreshed. Bless him for comfort. Why,

[1] Must struggle with.

[2] Bound up with splints.

none cometh dry from David's well. Let us go among the rest, and cast down our toom[1] buckets into Christ's ocean, and suck consolations out of him. We are not so sore stricken, but we may fill Christ's hall with weeping. We have not gotten our answer from him yet. Let us lay up our broken pleas to a full sea, and keep them till the day of Christ's coming. We and this world will not be even[2] till then: they would take our garment from us; but let us hold and them draw.

Brother, it is a strange world if we laugh not. I never saw the like of it, if there be not "paiks the man,"[3] for this contempt done to the Son of God? We must do as those who keep the bloody napkin to the baillie, and let him see blood: we must keep our wrongs to our Judge, and let him see our bluddered[4] and foul faces. Prisoners of hope must run to Christ, with the gutters that tears have made on their cheeks.

Brother, for myself, I am Christ's dawted[5] one for the present; and I live upon no deaf nuts,[6] (as we use to speak;) he hath opened fountains to me in the wilderness. Go, look to my Lord Jesus: his love to me is such, that I defy the world to find either brim or bottom in it. Grace be with you.

Your brother, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXLIII.

TO THE EARL OF CASSILLIS.

Right Honorable, and my very Good Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Lordship—I hope that your Lordship will be pleased to pardon my boldness, if, upon report of your zealous and forward mind, which I hear our Lord hath given you in this his honorable cause, when Christ and his Gospel are so foully wronged, I speak to your Lordship on paper, entreating your Lordship to go on in the strength of the Lord, toward, and against a storm of antichristian wind, that bloweth upon the face of this your poor mother-church, Christ's lily amongst the thorns. It is your Lordship's glory and happiness, when ye see such a blow coming upon Christ, to cast up your arm to prevent it. Neither is it a cause that needeth to blush before the sun, or to flee the sentence or censure of impartial beholders, seeing the question, indeed, (if it were rightly stated,) is about the prerogative-royal of our princely and royal Lawgiver, our Lord Jesus, whose ancient march-stones,[7] and land-bounds, our bastard lords, and earthly generation of tyrannizing prelates, have boldly and shamefully removed: and they who have but half an eye, may see, that it is

[1] Empty. [2] Quits.
[3] An expression used by those who were about to engage in a fight. *Paiks* signifies blows. [4] Blurred.
[5] Fondled, cockered. [6] Nuts without a kernel. [7] Land-marks.

the greedy desires of time idolizing Demases, and the itching scab of ambitious and climbing Diotrepheses, (who love the goat's life, to climb till they cannot find a way to set their soles on ground again,) that hath made such a wide breach in our Zion's beautiful walls:—and these are the men who seek no hire for the crucifying of Christ, but his coat.

Oh, how forlorn and desolate is the bride of Christ made to all passers-by! Who seeth not Christ buried in this land, his prophets hidden in caves, silenced, banished, and imprisoned; truth weeping in sackcloth before the judges, Parliament, and the rulers of the land? But her bill is cast by them, and holiness hideth itself, fearing in the streets, for the reproaches and persecution of men: justice is fallen aswoon[1] in the gate; and the long shadows of the evening are stretched out upon us. Wo, wo to us, for our day flieth away. What remaineth, but that Antichrist set down his tent in the midst of us, except that your Lordship, and others with you, read Christ's supplication, and give him that which the most lewd and scandalous wretches in this land may have before a judge, even the poor man's due, law and justice for God's sake? Oh, therefore, my noble, and dear Lord, as ye have begun, go on, in the mighty power and strength of the Lord, to cause our Lord in his Gospel, and afflicted members, to laugh, and to cause the Christian churches, (whose eyes are all now upon you,) to sing for joy when Scotland's moon shall shine like the light of the sun, and the sun like the light of seven days in one. Ye can do no less than run and bear up the head of your swooning, and dying Mother-church, and plead for the production of her ancient charters. They hold out and put out, they hold in, and bring in at their pleasure, men in God's house. They stole the keys from Christ and his Church, and came in like the thief and the robber, not by the door, Christ; and now their song is "Authority, authority, obedience to church-governors." When such a bastard and lawless pretended step-dame, as our prelacy, is gone mad, it is your place, who are the nobles, to rise and bind them: at least law should fetter such wild bulls as they are, who push all who oppose themselves to their domination. Alas! what have we lost, since prelates were made master-coiners, to change our gold into brass, and to mix the Lord's wine with water? Blessed forever shall ye be of the Lord, if ye help Christ against the mighty, and shall deliver the flock of God, scattered upon the mountains in the dark and cloudy day, out of the hands of these idol-shepherds. Fear not men that shall be moth-eaten clay, that shall be rolled up in a chest, and casten under the earth: let the Holy One of Israel be your fear, and be courageous for the Lord and his truth.

Remember that your accounts are coming upon you with wings, as fast as time posteth. Remember what peace with God in Christ, and the presence of the Son of God, the revealed and felt sweetness of his love, will be to you, when eternity shall put

[1] Into a swoon.

time to the door, and ye shall take good night at time, and this little shepherd's tent of clay, this inn of a borrowed earth. I hope that your Lordship is now and then sending out thoughts to view this world's noughtiness,[1] and vanity, and the hoped-for glory of the life to come; and that ye resolve that Christ shall have yourself, and all yours, at command for him, his honor and Gospel.

Thus trusting that your Lordship will pardon my boldness, I pray that the only wise God, the very God of peace, may preserve, strengthen, and establish you to the end.

Your Lordship's,

At all command and obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXLIV.

TO MY LORD BALMERINO.

My very Noble, and truly Honorable Lord,—I make bold to write news to your Lordship from my prison, though your Lordship have experience more than I can have. At my first entry here, I was not a little casten down with challenges,[2] for old repented-of sins; and Satan and my own apprehensions made a lie of Christ, that he had casten a dry, withered tree over the dyke of the vineyard; but it was my folly; blessed be his great name, the fire cannot burn the dry tree. He is pleased now to feast the exiled prisoner with his lovely presence: for it suiteth Christ well to be kind, and he dineth and suppeth with such a sinner as I am. I am in Christ's tutoring here. He hath made me content with a borrowed fireside, and it casteth as much heat as mine own. I want nothing but real possession of Christ: and he hath given me a pawn of that also, which I hope to keep till he come himself to loose the pawn.—I cannot get help to praise his high name. He hath mde me king over my losses, imprisonment, banishment, and only my dumb sabbaths stick in my throat: but I forgive Christ's wisdom in that. I dare not say one word; he hath done it, and I will lay my hand upon my mouth: if any other had done it to me, I could not have borne it.

Now my Lord, I must tell your Lordship, that I would not give a drink of cold water for this clay-idol, this plastered world. I testify and give it under my own hand, that Christ is most worthy to be suffered for. Our lazy flesh, which would have Christ to cry down crosses by open proclamation, hath but raised a slander upon the cross of Christ. My Lord, I hope that ye will not forget what he hath done for your soul: I think that ye are in Christ's count-book, as his obliged debtor.

Grace, grace be with your spirit.

Your Lordship's obliged servant, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

[1] Nothingness. [2] Self-accusations.

LETTER CXLV.

TO MY LADY MAR, YOUNGER.

My very Noble, and Dear Lady,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I received your Ladyship's letter, which hath comforted my soul. God give you to find mercy in the day of Christ.

I am in as good terms and court with Christ, as an exiled oppressed prisoner of Christ can be. I am still welcome to his house; he knoweth my knock, and letteth in a poor friend. Under this black, rough tree of the cross of Christ, he hath ravished me with his love, and taken my heart to Heaven with him. Well and long may he brook[1] it. I would not niffer[2] Christ with all the joys that man or angel can devise beside him. Who hath such cause to speak honorably of Christ as I have? Christ is King of all crosses, and he hath made his saints little kings under him; and he can ride and triumph upon weaker bodies than I am, (if any can be weaker,) and his horse will neither fall nor stumble.

Madam, your Ladyship hath much ado with Christ, for your soul, husband, children, and house. Let him find much employment for his calling with you; for he is such a friend as delighteth to be burdened with suits and employments; and the more ye lay on him, and the more homely[3] ye be with him, the more welcome. Oh the depth of Christ's love! It hath neither brim nor bottom. Oh, if[4] this blind world saw his beauty! When I count with him for his mercies to me, I must stand still and wonder, and go away as a poor dyvour,[5] who hath nothing to pay;—free forgiveness is payment. I would that I could get him set on high; for his love hath made me sick, and I die except I get real possession.

Grace, grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXLVI.

TO JAMES MACADAM.

My very Dear, and Worthy Friend,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I long to hear of your growing in grace, and of your advancing in your journey to Heaven. It will be the joy of my heart to hear that ye hold your face up the brae,[6] and wade through temptations without fearing what man can do. Christ shall, when he ariseth, mow down his enemies, and lay bouks,[7] (as they use to speak,) on the green, and fill the pits with dead

[1] Enjoy. [2] Exchange. [3] Familiar. [4] Oh, that.
[5] Bankrupt. [6] Ascent. [7] Carcases.

bodies, (Ps. cx. 6.) They shall lie like handfuls of withered hay, when he ariseth to the prey. Salvation, salvation is the only necessary thing: this clay-idol, the world, is not to be sought; it is a morsel not for you, but for hunger-bitten bastards. Contend for salvation. Your master, Christ, won Heaven with strokes; it is a besieged castle, it must be taken with violence. Oh, this world thinketh Heaven but at the next door, and that godliness may sleep in a bed of down, till it come to Heaven!—but that will not do it.

For myself, I am as well as Christ's prisoner can be; for by him I am master and king of all my crosses; I am above the prison, and the lash of men's tongues; Christ triumpheth in me. I have been casten down, and heavy with fears, and hunted with challenges. I was swimming in the depths, but Christ had his hand under my chin all the time, and took good heed that I should not lose breath; and now I have gotten my feet again, and there are love-feasts of joy, and spring-tides of consolation betwixt Christ and me. We agree well: I have court with him; I am still welcome to his house. Oh, my short arms cannot fathom his love! I beseech you, I charge you, to help me to praise. Ye have a prisoner's prayers, therefore forget me not.

I desire Sibylla to remember me dearly to all in that parish who know Christ, as if I had named them.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXLVII.

TO MY VERY DEAR BROTHER, WILLIAM LIVINGSTON.

My very Dear Brother,—I rejoice to hear that Christ hath run away with your young love, and that ye are so early in the morning matched with such a lord; for a young man is often a dressed lodging for the Devil to dwell in. Be humble and thankful for grace, and weigh it not so much by weight, as if it be true. Christ will not cast water on your smoking coal; he never yet put out a dim candle that was lighted at the Sun of Righteousness. I recommend to you prayer and watching over the sins of your youth; for I know that missive letters [1] go between the Devil and young blood. Satan hath a friend at court in the heart of youth; and there pride, luxury, lust, revenge, forgetfulness of God, are hired as his agents. Happy is your soul, if Christ man the house, and take the keys himself, and command all—as it suiteth him full well to rule all, wherever he is. Keep Christ, and entertain him well: cherish his grace; blow upon your own coal; and let him tutor you.

[1] Letters containing the outlines of an engagement, which is afterwards to be extended in due form.

Now for myself; know that I am fully agreed with my Lord. Christ hath put the Father and me into each other's arms:—many a sweet bargain he made before, and he hath made this among the rest. I reign as king over my crosses. I will not flatter a temptation, nor give the Devil a good word. I defy Hell's iron gates: God hath passed over my quarrelling of him at my entry here, and now he feedeth and feasteth with me.

Praise, praise with me; and let us exalt his name together.

Your brother in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXLVIII.

TO WILLIAM GORDON, OF WHITEPARK.

Worthy Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—I long to hear from you. I am here the Lord's prisoner and patient, handled as softly by my Physician as if I were a sick man under cure. I was at hard terms with my Lord, and pleaded with him, but I had the worst side. It is a wonder that he should have suffered the like of me to have nicknamed the Son of his love, Christ, and to call him a changed Lord who had forsaken me; but misbelief[1] hath never a good word to speak of Christ. The dross of my cross gathered a scum of fears in the fire, doubtings, impatience, unbelief, challenging of Providence as sleeping, and as not regarding my sorrow; but my Goldsmith, Christ, was pleased to take off the scum, and burn it in the fire. And, blessed be my Refiner, he hath made the metal better, and furnished new supply of grace, to cause me hold out weight; and I hope that he hath not lost one grain-weight by burning his servant. Now his love in my heart casteth a mighty heat: he knoweth that the desire I have to be at himself paineth me. I have sick nights and frequent fits of love-fevers for my Well-beloved. Nothing paineth me now but want of presence. I think it long till day. I challenge[2] time, as too slow in its pace, that holdeth my only, only fair One, my Love, my Well-beloved from me. Oh, if we were together once! I am like an old crazed ship that hath endured many storms, and that would fain be in the lee of the shore, and feareth new storms; I would be that[3] nigh Heaven, that the shadow of it might break the force of the storm, and the crazed ship might win[4] to land. My Lord's sun casteth a heat of love and beam of light on my soul. My blessing thrice every day upon the sweet cross of Christ. I am not ashamed of my garland, "The banished minister," which is the term of Aberdeen. Love, love defieth reproaches. The love of Christ hath a corslet of proof on it, and arrows will not draw blood of it. We are more than conquerors through the blood of Him that loved us, (Rom. viii.) The Devil and the world

[1] Wrong faith. [2] Accuse. [3] So. [4] Get.

cannot wound the love of Christ. I am further from yielding to the course of defection than when I came hither:—sufferings blunt not the fiery edge of love. Cast love into the floods of Hell, it will swim above. It careth not for the world's busked[1] and plastered offers. It hath pleased my Lord so to line my heart with the love of my Lord Jesus, that, as if the field were already won, and I on the other side of time, I laugh at the world's golden pleasures, and at this dirty idol, which the sons of Adam worship. This worm-eaten god is that which my soul hath fallen out of love with.

Sir, ye were once my hearer: I desire now to hear from you and your wife. I salute her and your children with blessings. I am glad that ye are still hand-fasted[2] with Christ. Go on in your journey, and take the city by violence. Keep your garments clean. Be clean virgins to your Husband the Lamb. The world shall follow you to Heaven's gates: and ye would not wish it to go in with you. Keep fast Christ's love. Pray for me, as I do for you. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CXLIX.

TO MR. GEORGE GILLESPIE.

Reverend, and Dear Brother,—I received your letter.—As for my case, brother, I bless His glorious name, that my losses are my gain, my prison a palace, and my sadness joyfulness. At my first entry, my apprehensions so wrought upon my cross, that I became jealous[3] of the love of Christ, as being by him thrust out of the vineyard, and I was under great challenges, (as ordinarily melted gold casteth forth a drossy scum, and Satan and our corruption form the first words that the heavy cross speaketh, and say, "God is angry, he loveth you not,") but our apprehensions are not canonical; they indite lies of God and Christ's love. But since my spirit was settled, and the clay has fallen to the bottom of the well, I see better what Christ was doing. And now my Lord is returned with salvation under his wings. Now I want little of half a heaven, and I find Christ every day so sweet, comfortable, lovely, and kind, that three things only trouble me. 1, I see not how to be thankful, or how to get help to praise that royal King, who raiseth up those that are bowed down. 2, His love paineth me, and woundeth my soul, so that I am in a fever for want of real presence. 3, An excessive desire to take instruments[4] in God's name, that this is Christ and his truth, which I now suffer for; yea, the apple of the eye of Christ's honor, even the sovereignty and royal privileges of our King and Lawgiver, Christ; and, there-

[1] Decked. [2] Affianced. [3] Suspicious.
[4] To declare, and claim that the declaration be recorded as evidence.

fore, let no man scaur[1] at Christ's cross, or raise an ill report upon him, or it; for he beareth the sufferer and it both.

I am here troubled with the disputes of the great doctors, (especially with D. B. in ceremonial and Arminian controversies, for all are corrupt here;) but, I thank God, with no detriment to the truth, or discredit to my profession. So, then, I see that Christ can triumph in a weaker man nor[2] I: and who can be more weak? but his grace is sufficient for me.

Brother, remember our old covenant, and pray for me, and write to me your case. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

LETTER CL.

TO JEAN GORDON.

My very Dear, and Loving Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to hear from you. I exhort you to set up the brae[3] to the King's city, that must be taken by violence. Your afternoon's sun is wearing low. Time will eat up your frail life, like a worm gnawing at the root of a May-flower. Lend Christ your heart. Set him as a seal there. Take him in within, and let the world, and children stand at the door. They are not yours; make you and them for your proper owner, Christ. It is good that he is your Husband and their Father. What missing can there be of a dying man, when God filleth his chair? Give hours of the day to prayer. Fash[4] Christ, (if I may speak so,) and importune him; be often at his gate; give his door no rest. I can tell you that he will be found. Oh, what sweet fellowship is betwixt him and me! I am imprisoned, but he is not imprisoned. He hath shamed me with his kindness. He hath come to my prison, and run away with my heart and all my love. Well may he brook[5] it! I wish that my love get never an owner but Christ. Fy, fy upon old lovers, that held us so long asunder! We shall not part now. He and I shall be heard, before he win out of my grips.[6] I resolve to wrestle with Christ, ere I quit him. But my love to him hath casten my soul into a fever, and there is no cooling of my fever, till I get real possession of Christ. O strong, strong love of Jesus, thou hast wounded my heart with thine arrows! O pain! Oh pain of love for Christ! Who will help me to praise?

Let me have your prayers. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 13, 1637.

[1] Boggle. [2] Than. [3] Ascent.
[4] Pester. [5] Possess and enjoy. [6] Get out of my hands.

LETTER CLI.

TO MR. JAMES BRUCE, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

REVEREND, AND WELL-BELOVED BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Upon the nearest acquaintance, that we are Father's children, I thought good to write to you. My case in my bonds, for the honor of my royal Prince and King, Jesus, is as good as becometh the witness of such a sovereign King. At my first coming hither, I was in great heaviness, wrestling with challenges, being burdened in heart, (as I am yet,) for my silent sabbaths, and for a bereaved people, young ones, new-born, plucked from the breasts, and the children's table drawn. I thought I was a dry tree cast over the dyke of the vineyard: but my secret conceptions of Christ's love, at his sweet and long-desired return to my soul, were found to be a lie of Christ's love, forged by the Tempter, and my own heart, and I am persuaded it was so. Now there is greater peace and security within than before: the court is raised and dismissed, for it was not fenced[1] in God's name. I was far mistaken, who should have summoned Christ for unkindness; misted[2] faith, and my fever conceived amiss of him. Now, now, he is pleased to feast a poor prisoner, and to refresh me with joy unspeakable and glorious; so, as the Holy Spirit is witness, that my sufferings are for Christ's truth; and God forbid that I should deny the testimony of the Holy Spirit, and make him a false witness. Now I testify under my hand, out of some small experience, that Christ's cause, even with the cross, is better than the King's crown; and that his reproaches are sweet, his cross perfumed, the walls of my prison fair and large, my losses gain.

I desire you, my dear brother, to help me to praise, and to remember me in your prayer to God. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in our Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLII.

TO JOHN GORDON, AT RUSCO, IN GALLOWAY.

MY WORTHY, AND DEAR BROTHER,—Misspend not your short sand-glass, which runneth very fast; seek your Lord in time. Let me obtain of you a letter under your hand, for a promise to God, by his grace, to take a new course of walking with God. Heaven is not at the next door; I find it hard to be a Christian; there is no little thrusting and thringing[3] to thrust in at Heaven's gates; it is a castle taken by force:—"Many shall strive to enter in, and shall not be able."

[1] Opened by declaring the constitution. [2] Bewildered.
[3] Pressing, as through a crowd or thicket.

I beseech and obtest you in the Lord, to make conscience of rash and passionate oaths, of raging and sudden, avenging anger, of night drinking, of needless companionry,[1] of sabbath-breaking, of hurting any under you by word or deed, of hating your very enemies. "Except ye receive the Kingdom of God as a little child," and be as meek and sober-minded as a babe, "ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." That is a word which should touch you near, and make you stoop and cast yourself down, and make your great spirit fall. I know that this will not be easily done, but I recommend it to you as you tender your part of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Brother, I may, from new experience, speak of Christ to you. Oh, if[2] ye saw in him what I see! A river of God's unseen joys have flowed from bank to brae[3] over my soul since I parted with you. I wish that I wanted part, so being ye might have; that your soul might be sick of love for Christ, or rather satiated with him. This clay idol, the world, would seem to you, then, not worth a fig; time will eat you out of possession of it. When the eye-strings break, and the breath groweth cold, and the imprisoned soul looketh out of the windows of the clay-house, ready to leap out into eternity, what would you then give for a lamp full of oil? Oh seek it now.

I desire you to correct and curb banning,[4] swearing, lying, drinking, sabbath-breaking, and idle spending of the Lord's day in absence from the kirk, as far as your authority reacheth in that parish.

I hear that a man is to be thrust into that place, to the which I have God's right: I know that ye should have a voice by God's word in that, (Acts i. 15, 16, to the end, and Acts vi. 3, 5.) Ye would be loath that any prelate should put you out of your possession earthly, and this is your right. What I write to you, I write to your wife. Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLIII.

TO THE LADY HALLHILL.

Dear, and Christian Lady,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I longed much to write to your Ladyship; but now, the Lord offering a fit occasion, I would not omit to do it.

I cannot but acquaint your Ladyship with the kind dealing of Christ to my soul, in this house of my pilgrimage, that your Ladyship may know that he is as good as he is called: for at my first entry into this trial, (being casten down and troubled with challenges and jealousies of His love, whose name and testimony I

[1] Companions.
[2] Oh, that.
[3] From bank to bank.
[4] Minced oaths.

now bear in my bonds,) I feared nothing more than that I was casten over the dyke of the vineyard, as a dry tree. But, blessed be his great name, the dry tree was in the fire, and was not burnt; his dew came down and quickened the root of a withered plant; and now he is come again with joy, and hath been pleased to feast his exiled and afflicted prisoner with the joy of his consolations. Now I weep, but am not sad; I am chastened, but I die not; I have loss, but I want nothing; this water cannot drown me, this fire cannot burn me, because of the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush. The worst things of Christ, his reproaches, his cross, are better than Egypt's treasures. He hath opened his door, and taken into his house-of-wine a poor sinner, and hath left me so sick of love for my Lord Jesus, that if Heaven were at my disposing, I would give it for Christ, and would not be content to go to Heaven, except I were persuaded that Christ were there. I would not give, nor exchange my bonds for the Prelates' velvets; nor my prison for their coaches; nor my sighs for all the world's laughter: —this clay idol, the world, hath no great court[1] in my soul. Christ hath come, and run away to Heaven with my heart and my love, so that neither heart nor love is mine:—I pray God, that Christ may keep both without reversion. In my estimation, as I am now disposed, if my part of this world's clay were rouped[2] and sold, I would think it dear of a drink of water. I see Christ's love is so kingly, that it will not abide a marrow;[3] it must have a throne all alone in the soul. And I see that apples beguile bairns, howbeit they be worm-eaten: the moth-eaten pleasures of this present world make bairns believe ten is a hundred, and yet all that are here are but shadows. If they would draw by the curtain that is hung betwixt them and Christ, they should see themselves fools who have so long miskenned[4] the Son of God. I seek no more, next to Heaven, than that he may be glorified in a prisoner of Christ; and that in my behalf many would praise His high and glorious name who heareth the sighing of the prisoner.

Remember my service to the Laird your husband, and to your son my acquaintance. I wish that Christ had his young love, and that in the morning he would start to the gate to seek that which this world knoweth not, and, therefore, doth not seek it.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLIV.

TO THE MUCH HONORED JOHN OSBURN, PROVOST OF AYR.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—Upon our small acquaintance, and the good report I hear of you,

[1] Influence.
[2] Auctioned.
[3] A fellow companion.
[4] Mistaken, misapprehended.

I could not but write to you: I have nothing to say, but that Christ, in that honorable place he hath put you in, hath intrusted you with a dear pledge, which is his own glory; and hath armed you with his sword to keep the pledge and make a good account of it to God. Be not afraid of men. Your Master can mow down his enemies, and make withered hay of fair flowers. Your time will not be long: after your afternoon will come your evening, and after evening, night. Serve Christ, back him; let his cause be your cause; give not an hair-breadth of truth away; for it is not yours, but God's. Then, since ye are going, take Christ's testificate[1] with you out of this life—"Well done, good and faithful servant!" His "well-done" is worth a shipful of "good-days" and earthly honors. I have cause to say this, because I find him Truth itself. In my sad days, Christ laugheth cheerfully, and saith, "All will be well!" Would to God that all this kingdom, and all that know God, knew what is betwixt Christ and me in this prison—what kisses, embracements, and love communions. I take his cross in my arms with joy; I bless it, I rejoice in it—suffering for Christ is my garland. I would not exchange Christ for ten thousand worlds! nay, if the comparison could stand, I would not exchange Christ with Heaven.

Sir, pray for me, and the prayers, and blessing of a prisoner of Christ meet you in all your straits. Grace be with you.

Yours, in Christ Jesus, his Lord, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLV.

TO HIS LOVING FRIEND, JOHN HENDERSON.

LOVING FRIEND,—Continue in the love of Christ, and the doctrine which I taught you faithfully, and painfully, according to my measure. I am free of your blood. Fear the dreadful name of God. Keep in mind the examinations which I taught you, and love the truth of God. Death, as fast as time fleeth, chaseth you out of this life; it is possible that ye may make your reckoning with your Judge before I see you. Let salvation be your care, night and day, and set aside hours and times of the day for prayer. I rejoice to hear that there is prayer in your house. See that your servants keep the Lord's day. This dirt and god of clay, I mean the vain world, is not worth the seeking.

An hireling pastor is to be thrust in upon you, into the room to which I have Christ's warrant and right. Stand to your liberties, for the word of God alloweth you a vote in choosing your pastor.

What I write to you, I write to your wife. Commend me heartily to her. The grace of God be with you.

Your loving friend, and pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

[1] Certificate of character.

LETTER CLVI.

TO JOHN MEINE.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I wonder that ye sent me not an answer to my last letter, for I stand in need of it. I am in some piece of court[1] with our great King, whose love would cause a dead man to speak, and live: whether my court will continue or not, I cannot well say; but I have his ear frequently, and, (to his glory only I speak it,) no penury of the love-kisses of the Son of God. He thinketh good to cast apples to me in my prison, to play withal, lest I should think long[2] and faint. I must give over all attempts to fathom the depth of his love. All I can do is, but to stand beside his great love, and look and wonder. My debts of thankfulness affright me: I fear that my creditor get a dyvour-bill[3] and ragged account.

I would be much the better of help,—oh, for help! and that ye would take notice of my case. Your not writing to me maketh me think ye suppose that I am not to be bemoaned, because he sendeth comfort; but I have pain in my unthankfulness, and pain in the feeling of his love, whill I am sick again for real presence and real possession of Christ; yet there is no gowked,[4] (if I may so speak,) nor fond love in Christ. He casteth me down sometimes for old faults: and I know that he knoweth well that sweet comforts are swelling: and, therefore, sorrow must take a vent to the wind.

My dumb sabbaths are undercoating[5] wounds. The condition of this oppressed Kirk, and my brother's case, (I thank you and your wife for your kindness to him,) hold my sore smarting, and keep my wounds bleeding; but the ground-work standeth sure. Pray for me.

Grace be with you. Remember me to your wife.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLVII.

TO MR. THOMAS GARVEN.

Reverend, and Dear Brother,—I bless you for your letter: it was a shower to the new-mown grass. The Lord hath given you the tongue of the learned; be fruitful and humble.

It is possible that ye may come to my case, or the like; but the water is neither so deep, nor the stream so strong, as it is called. I think my fire is not so hot, my water is dry land, my loss rich loss. Oh,[6] if the walls of my prison be high, wide and large, and

[1] Favor. [2] Lose heart with on-waiting. [3] Bankrupt-account.
[4] Gawkish, foolish. [5] Festering under the skin. [6] Oh, but.

the place sweet! No man knoweth it, no man, I say, knoweth it, my dear brother, so well as he and I: no man can put it down in black and white as my Lord hath sealed it in my heart. My poor stock is grown since I came to Aberdeen; and if any had known the wrong I did, in being jealous of such an honest lover as Christ, who withheld not his love from me, they would think the more of it; but I see, he must be above me in mercy. I will never strive with him; to think to recompense him is folly. If I had as many angels' tongues, as there have fallen of drops of rain since the creation, or as there are leaves of trees in all the forests of the earth, or of stars in the Heaven, to praise, yet my Lord Jesus would ever be behind with[1] me. We will never get our accounts fitted. A pardon must close the reckoning: for his comforts to me in this honorable cause have almost put me beyond the bounds of modesty: howbeit I will not let every one know what is betwixt us. Love, love, (I mean Christ's love,) is the hottest coal that ever I felt. Oh, but the smoke of it be hot! Cast all the salt sea on it, it will flame; Hell cannot quench it: many, many waters will not quench love. Christ is turned over to his poor prisoner in a mass and globe of love: I wonder that he should waste so much love upon such a waster as I am; but he is no waster, but abundant in mercy; he hath no niggard's alms, when he is pleased to give. Oh that I could invite all the nation to love him! Free grace is an unknown thing. This world hath heard but a bare name of Christ, and no more. There are infinite plies in his love, that the saints will never win[2] to unfold: I would it were better known, and that Christ got more of his own due than he doth.

Brother, ye have chosen the good part, who have taken part with Christ: ye will see him win the field, and shall get part of the spoil when he divideth it. They are but fools who laugh at us; for they see but the backside of the moon; yet our moon-light is better than their twelve hours'[3] sun. We have gotten the New Heavens, and, as a pledge of that, the Bridegroom's love-ring. The children of the wedding-chamber have cause to skip, and leap for joy; for the marriage-supper is drawing nigh, and we find the four-hours[4] sweet and comfortable. O time, be not slow! O sun, move speedily, and hasten our banquet! O Bridegroom, be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains! O Well-beloved, run fast, that we may once meet!

Brother, I restrain myself, for want of time. Pray for me; I hope to remember you. The good-will of Him, who dwelt in the bush, the tender mercies of God in Christ, enrich you. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

1 That is, would never get all that is due to him from me. 2 Attain.
3 Noon-day. 4 Slight repast in the afternoon.

LETTER CLVIII.

TO BETHAIA AIRD.

Worthy Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you—I know that ye desire news from my prison, and I shall show you news. At my first entry hither, Christ and I agreed not well upon it. The Devil made a plea[1] in the house, and I laid the blame upon Christ; for my heart was fraughted with challenges,[2] and I feared that I was an outcast, and that I was but a withered tree in the vineyard, and but held the sun off the good plants with my idle shadow, and that, therefore, my Master had given the evil serpent the fields, to fend him.[3] Old guiltiness said, (as witness,) "All is true:" my apprehensions were with child of faithless fears, and unbelief put a seal and amen to all. I thought myself in a hard case. Some said, I had cause to rejoice, that Christ had honored me to be a witness for him; and I said in my heart, "These are words of men, who see but mine outside, and cannot tell if I be a false witness or not."

If Christ had in this matter been as wilful and short[4] as I was, my faith had gone over the brae,[5] and broken its neck. But we were well met, a hasty fool, and a wise, patient and meek Saviour. He took no law-advantage of my folly, but waited on till my ill blood was fallen, and my drumbled[6] and troubled well began to clear. He was never a whit angry at the fever-ravings of a poor tempted sinner: but he mercifully forgave, and came, as it well becometh him, with grace and new comfort to a sinner who deserved the contrary. And, now he is content to kiss my black mouth, to put his hand into mine, and to feed me with as many consolations, as would feed ten hungry souls! yet I dare not say, that he is a waster of comforts, for no less would have borne me up; one grain-weight less would have casten[7] the balance.

Now, who is like to that royal King, crowned in Zion! Where shall I get a seat for royal majesty, to set him on? If I could set him as far above the Heaven as thousand thousands of heights devised by men and angels, I should think him but too low. I pray you, for God's sake, my dear sister, to help me to praise. His love hath neither brim nor bottom: his love is like himself, it passeth all natural understanding. I go to fathom it with my arms, but it is as if a child would take the globe of sea and land in his two short arms:—blessed and holy is his name! This must be his truth which I now suffer for; for he would not laugh upon a lie, nor be witness with his comforts to a night-dream.

I entreat for your prayers: and the prayer and blessing of a prisoner of Christ be upon you. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

[1] Dispute. [2] Laden with accusations.
[3] That is, had cast him out of the house into the open fields. [4] Hasty.
[5] Bank. [6] Muddied. [7] Turned.

LETTER CLIX.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF KNOCKGRAY.

Dear Brother,—I have not leisure to write to you. Christ's ways were known to you, long before I, who am but a child, knew anything of him. What wrong and violence the prelates may, by God's permission, do unto you, for your trial, I know not; but this I know, that your ten days' tribulation will end. Contend to the last breath for Christ. Banishment out of these kingdoms is determined against me, as I hear. This land dow not[1] bear me. I pray you, to recommend my case and bonds to my brethren, and sisters, with you. I intrust more of my spiritual comfort to you and them, that way, my dear brother, than to many in this kingdom besides. I hope that ye will not be wanting to Christ's prisoner.

Fear nothing, for I assure you that Alexander Gordon of Knockgray, shall win away,[2] and get his soul for a prey: and what can he then want, that is worth the having? Your friends are cold, (as ye write,) and so are those in whom I trusted much. Our Husband doeth well in breaking our idols in pieces: dry wells send us to the fountain. My life is not dear to me, so being I may fulfil my course with joy. I fear that ye must remove, if your new hireling will not bear your discountenancing of him; for the Prelate is afraid that Christ get you; and that he hath no will to.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLX.

TO GRIZZEL FULLERTON.

Dear Sister.—I exhort you in the Lord, to seek your one thing, Mary's good part, that shall not be taken from you. Set your heart and soul on the children's inheritance: this clay-idol, the world, is but for bastards, and ye are his lawfully-begotten child. Learn the way, (as your dear mother hath gone before you,) to knock at Christ's door. Many an alms of mercy hath Christ given to her, and hath abundance behind to give to you. Ye are the seed of the faithful, and born within the Covenant. Claim your right. I would not exchange Christ Jesus for ten worlds of glory: I know now, (blessed be my Teacher!) how to shute[3] the lock, and unbolt my Well-beloved's door:—and he maketh a poor stranger welcome when he cometh to his house. I am swelled up and satisfied with the love of Christ, that is better

[1] Is not able.

[2] *To win away*, to escape, by death, from the evils of this life.

[3] Push back.

than wine. It is a fire in my soul: let Hell and the world cast water on it, they will not mend themselves. I have now gotten the right gate[1] of Christ. I recommend him to you above all things. Come and find[2] the smell of his breath; see if his kisses be not sweet; he desireth no better than to be much made of. Be homely[3] with him, and ye shall be the more welcome:—ye know not how fain Christ would have all your love. Think not that this is imaginations and bairns' play, which we make din for. I would not suffer for it, if it were so. I dare pawn my heaven for it, that it is the way to glory. Think much of truth, and abhor these ways devised by men in God's worship.

The grace of Christ be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLXI.

TO PATRICK CARSEN.

Dear, and Loving Friend,—I cannot but, upon the opportunity of a bearer, exhort you to resign the love of your youth to Christ, and, in this day, while your sun is high, and your youth serveth you, to seek the Lord and his face; for there is nothing out of Heaven so necessary for you as Christ. And ye cannot be ignorant, that your day will end, and that the night of death shall call you from the pleasures of this life;—and a doom given out in death, standeth forever, as long as God liveth. Youth, ordinarily, is a post, and ready servant for Satan, to run errands; for it is a nest for lust, cursing, drunkenness, blaspheming of God, lying, pride, and vanity. Oh, that there were such an heart in you, as to fear the Lord, and to dedicate your soul and body to his service! When the time cometh that your eye-strings shall break, and your face wax pale, and legs and arms tremble, and your breath grow cold, and your poor soul look out at your prison house of clay, to be set at liberty; then a good conscience, and your Lord's favor shall be worth all the world's glory. Seek it as your garland and crown. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLXII.

TO CARLTON.

Much Honored Sir,—I will not impute your not writing to me to forgetfulness; however, I have One above who forgetteth

[1] Way. [2] Feel. [3] Familiar.

me not—nay, he groweth in his kindness. It hath pleased his holy Majesty to take me from the pulpit, and teach me many things, in my exile and prison, that were mysteries to me before: as, 1st, I see his bottomless and boundless love and kindness, and my jealousies and ravings, which, at my first entry into this furnace, were so foolish and bold, as to say to Christ, who is truth itself, in his face, "Thou liest." I had well nigh lost my grips.[1] I wondered if it was Christ, or not; for the mist and smoke of my perturbed heart made me mistake my Master, Jesus; my faith was dim, and hope frozen and cold; and my love, which caused jealousies, had some warmness, and heat, and smoke, but no flame at all; yet I was looking for some good of Christ's old claim to me. I thought I had forfeited all my rights; but the Tempter was too much upon my counsels, and was still blowing the coal. Alas! I knew not well before, how good skill my Intercessor, and Advocate, Christ, hath of pleading, and of pardoning me such follies. Now he is returned to my soul with healing under his wings; and I am nothing behind[2] with Christ now; for he hath overpaid me, by his presence, the pain I was put to by on-waiting, and any little loss that I sustained by my witnessing against the wrongs done to him. I trow, it was a pain to my Lord to hide himself any longer: in a manner, he was challenging[3] his own unkindness, and repented him of his glooms:[4] and now, what want I on earth, that Christ can give to a poor prisoner! Oh, how sweet and lovely is he now! Alas, that I can get none to help me to lift up my Lord Jesus upon his throne, above all the earth.

2ndly, I am now brought to some measure of submission, and I resolve to wait till I see what my Lord Jesus will do with me. I dare not now nickname or speak one word against the all-seeing and over-watching providence of my Lord. I see that providence runneth not on broken wheels; but I, like a fool, carved a providence for mine own ease, to die in my nest, and to sleep still till my gray hairs, and to lie on the sunny side of the mountain, in my ministry at Anwoth; but now I have nothing to say against a borrowed fire-side, and another man's house, nor Kedar's tents, where I live, being removed far from my acquaintance, my lovers, and my friends. I see that God hath the world on his wheels, and casteth it as a potter doth a vessel on the wheel. I dare not say that there is any inordinate or irregular motion in Providence. The Lord hath done it: I will not go to law with Christ, for I would gain nothing of that.

3rdly, I have learned some greater mortification, and not to mourn after, or seek to suck the world's dry breasts: nay, my Lord hath filled me with such dainties, that I am like to a full banqueter, who is not for common cheer. What have I to do, to fall down upon my knees, and worship mankind's great idol, the world? I have a better God than any clay-god: nay, at present, as I am now disposed, I care not much to give this world a dis-

[1] Hold.
[2] That is, in receiving payment.
[3] Accusing.
[4] Frowns.

charge of my life-rent of it, for bread and water. I know that it is not my home, nor my Father's house; it is but his footstool, the outer-close of his house, his out-fields[1] and muir-ground;[2] let bastards take it. I hope never to think myself in its common, for honor or riches—nay, now, I say to laughter, "Thou art madness."

4thly, I find it to be most true, that the greatest temptation out of Hell, is, to live without temptations. If my waters should stand, they would rot. Faith is the better of the free air, and of the sharp winter storm in its face. Grace withereth without adversity. The Devil is but God's master-fencer, to teach us to handle our weapons.

5thly, I never knew how weak I was, till now, when he hideth himself, and when I have him to seek seven times a day. I am a dry and withered branch, and a piece of a dead carcase, dry bones, and not able to step over a straw. The thoughts of my old sins are as the summons of death to me; and of late my brother's case hath stricken me to the heart. When my wounds are closing, a little riffle[3] causeth them to bleed afresh: so thin-skinned is my soul, that I think it is like a tender man's skin, that may touch nothing. Ye see, how short I would shoot of the prize, if his grace were not sufficient for me.

Wo is me for the day of Scotland; wo, wo is me for my Harlot-mother; for the decree is gone forth: women of this land shall call the childless and miscarrying wombs blessed. The anger of the Lord is gone forth, and shall not return, till he perform the purpose of his heart against Scotland: yet he shall make Scotland a new sharp instrument, having teeth to thresh the mountains, and fan the hills as chaff.

The prisoner's blessing be upon you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 14, 1637.

LETTER CLXIII.

TO THE LADY BUSBIE.

Mistress,—I know that ye are thinking, sometimes, what Christ is doing in Zion, and that the haters of Zion may get the bottom of our cup, and the burning coals of our furnace, that we have been tried in those many years by-gone.[4] Oh, that this nation would be awakened, to cry mightily unto God, for the setting up of a new tabernacle to Christ in Scotland. Oh, if this kingdom knew how worthy Christ were of his room! His worth was ever above man's estimation of him.

And for myself I am pained at the heart, that I cannot find myself disposed to leave myself, and go wholly into Christ. Alas, that

[1] The worst parts of an arable farm, which, though tilled from time to time, yet, in the ancient system of Scottish husbandry, received no manure.

[2] Untillable ground, covered with heath. [3] Ruffle, abrasion. [4] By-past.

there should be one bit of me out of him, and that we leave too much liberty and latitude for ourselves, and our own ease, and credit, and pleasures, and so little room for all-love-worthy Christ! Oh, what pains and charges it costeth Christ ere he get us! and when all is done, we are not worth the having. It is a wonder that he should seek the like of us: but love overlooketh blackness and fecklessness;[1] for if it had not been so, Christ would never have made so fair and blessed a bargain with us, as the covenant of grace is. I find that in all our sufferings, Christ is but redding marches,[2] that every one of us may say, "Mine, and thine," and that men may know by their crosses, how weak a bottom nature is to stand upon in a trial; that the end which our Lord intendeth, in all our sufferings, is to bring grace into court[3] and request amongst us. I should succumb and come short of Heaven, if I had no more than my own strength to support me; and if Christ should say to me, "Either do or die," it were easy to determine what should become of me: the choice were easy, for I behooved to die, if Christ should pass by with straitened bowels; and who then would take us up in our straits? I know we may say that Christ is kindest in his love, when we are at our weakest; and that if Christ had not been to the fore[4] in our sad days, the waters had gone over our soul. His mercy hath a set period, and appointed a place, how far, and no further, the sea of affliction shall flow, and where the waves thereof shall be stayed. He prescribeth how much pain and sorrow, both for weight and measure, we must have; ye have, then, good cause to recall your love from all lovers, and give it to Christ: He, who is afflicted in all your afflictions, looketh not on you in your sad hours with an insensible heart or dry eyes. All the Lord's saints may see that it is lost love which is bestowed upon this perishing world. Death and judgment will make men lament, that ever their miscarrying hearts carried them to lay and lavish out their love upon false appearances and night-dreams. Alas! that Christ should fare the worse, because of his own goodness, in making peace and the Gospel to ride together; and that we have never yet weighed the worth of Christ in his ordinances; and that now we are like to be deprived of the well, ere we have tasted the sweetness of the water:—it may be that with watery eyes, and a wet face, and wearied feet, we seek Christ, and shall not find him. Oh, that this land were humbled in time, and by prayers, cries and humiliation would bring Christ in at the church-door again, now, when his back is turned towards us, and he is gone to the threshold, and his one foot, as it were, is out of the door! I am sure that his departure is our deserving; we have bought it with our iniquities; for even the Lord's own children are fallen asleep: and, alas! professors are made all of shows and fashions, and are not at pains to recover themselves again. Every one hath his set measure of faith and holiness, and contenteth himself with but a stinted measure of godliness, as if that were

[1] Worthlessness.
[2] Settling boundaries.
[3] Favor.
[4] Extant, existing.

enough to bring him to Heaven. We forget that as our gifts and light grow, so God's gain, and the interest of his talents, should grow also; and that we cannot pay God with the old use and wont, (as we use to speak,) which we gave him seven years ago; for this were to mock the Lord, and to make price with him as we list. Oh, what difficulty is there in our Christian journey! and how often come we short of many thousand things that are Christ's due! and we consider not how far our dear Lord is behind with us.

Mistress, I cannot render you thanks, as I would, for your kindness to my brother, an oppressed stranger; but I remember you unto the Lord as I am able. I entreat you to think upon me, his prisoner, and pray that the Lord would be pleased to give me room to speak to his people in his name.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXIV.

TO JOHN FLEMING, BAILLIE OF LEITH.

Worthy, and Dearly Beloved in the Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—I received your letter. I wish that I could satisfy your desire, in drawing up, and framing for you a Christian directory; but the learned have done it before me, more judiciously than I can; especially Mr. Rodgers, Greenham, and Perkins: notwithstanding, I shall show you what I would have been at, myself; howbeit I came always short of my purpose.

1. That hours of the day, less or more time, for the word and prayer, be given to God, not sparing the twelfth hour, or mid-day, howbeit it should then be the shorter time.

2. In the midst of worldly employments, there should be some thoughts of sin, death, judgment, and eternity, with, at least, a word or two of ejaculatory prayer to God.

3. To beware of wandering of heart in private prayers.

4. Not to grudge, howbeit ye come from prayer without sense of joy:—down-casting, sense of guiltiness, and hunger, are often best for us.

5. That the Lord's day, from morning to night, be spent always either in private or public worship.

6. That words be observed, wandering and idle thoughts be avoided, sudden anger and desire of revenge, even of such as persecute the truth, be guarded against; for we often mix our zeal with our wild-fire.

7. That known, discovered, and revealed sins, that are against the conscience, be eschewed, as most dangerous preparatives to hardness of heart.

8. That in dealing with men, faith and truth in covenants and trafficking be regarded, that we deal with all men in sincerity; that conscience be made of idle and lying words; and that our carriage be such, as that they who see it, may speak honorably of our sweet Master and profession.

9. I have been much challenged, 1. For not referring all to God, as the last end; that I do not eat, drink, sleep, journey, speak, and think for God. 2. That I have not benefited by good company; and that I left not some word of conviction, even upon natural and wicked men, as by reproving swearing in them, or because of being a silent witness to their loose carriage, and because I intended not in all companies to do good. 3. That the woes and calamities of the Kirk, and of particular professors, have not moved me. 4. That at the reading of the life of David, Paul, and the like, when it humbled me, I, (coming so far short of their holiness,) labored not to imitate them, afar off at least, according to the measure of God's grace. 5. That unrepented sins of youth were not looked to, and lamented for. 6. That sudden stirrings of pride, lust, revenge, love of honors, were not resisted and mourned for. 7. That my charity was cold. 8. That the experiences I had, of God's hearing me in this and the other particular, being gathered, yet in a new trouble I had always, (once at least,) my faith to seek, as if I were to begin at A B C again. 9. That I have not more boldly contradicted the enemies, speaking against the truth, either in public church-meetings, or at tables, or ordinary conference. 10. That in great troubles, I have received false reports of Christ's love, aud misbelieved[1] him in his chastening; whereas the event hath said, "All was in mercy." 11. Nothing more moveth me, and weighteth[2] my soul, than that I could never for my heart, in my prosperity, so wrestle in prayer with God, nor be so dead to the world, so hungry and sick of love for Christ, so heavenly-minded, as when ten stone-weight of a heavy cross was upon me. 12. That the cross extorted vows of new obedience, which ease hath blown away, as chaff before the wind. 13. That practice was so short and narrow, and light so long and broad. 14. That death hath not been often meditated upon. 15. That I have not been careful of gaining others to Christ. 16. That my grace and gifts bring forth little or no thankfulness.

There are some things, also, whereby I have been helped; as, —1. I have benefited by riding alone a long journey, in giving that time to prayer. 2. By abstinence, and giving days to God. 3. By praying for others; for by making an errand to God for them, I have gotten something for myself. 4. I have been really confirmed in many particulars, that God heareth prayers; and, therefore, I used to pray for anything, of how little importance soever. 5. He enabled me to make no question, that this mocked way, which is nicknamed, is the only way to Heaven.

Sir, these, and many moe occurrences in your life, should be

[1] Not believed aright. [2] Depresseth.

looked unto: and,—1. Thoughts of atheism should be watched over, as, If there be a God in Heaven; which will trouble and assault the best, at some times. 2. Growth in grace should be cared for, above all things; and falling from our first love mourned for. 3. Conscience made of praying for the enemies, who are blinded.

Sir, I thank you most kindly for the care of my brother, and of me also. I hope it is laid up for you, and remembered in Heaven.

I am still ashamed with Christ's kindness to such a sinner as I am: he hath left a fire in my heart, that Hell cannot cast water on, to quench or extinguish it. Help me to praise, and pray for me; for ye have a prisoner's blessing and prayers.

Remember my love to your wife. Grace be with you.

Yours, in Christ Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, March 15, 1637.

LETTER CLXV.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF EARLSTON.

Much Honored, and Worthy Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you—I long to hear from you. I have received few letters since I came hither: I am in need of a word; a dry plant should have some watering.

My case betwixt Christ my Lord, and me, standeth between love and jealousy, faith and suspicion of his love;—it is a marvel he keepeth house with me. I make many pleas[1] with Christ, but he maketh as many agreements with me. I think his unchangeable love hath said, "I defy thee to break me and change me." If Christ had such changeable and new thoughts of my salvation, as I have of it, I think I should then be at a sad loss. He humoreth not a fool like me in my unbelief, but rebuketh me, and fathereth kindness upon me. Christ is rather like the poor friend and needy prisoner, (begging love,) than I am. I cannot, for shame, get Christ said nay of my whole love; for he will not want his errand for the seeking. God be thanked that my Bridegroom tireth not of wooing. Honor to him! he is a wilful suitor of my soul. But as love is his, pain is mine, that I have nothing to give him; his account-book is full of my debts of mercy, kindness, and free love towards me. Oh that I might read with watery eyes! Oh that he would give me the interest of interest to pay back! or rather, my soul's desire is, that he would comprise[2] my person, soul and body, love, joy, confidence, fear, sorrow, and desire, and drive the poind,[3] and let me be rouped,[4] and sold to Christ, and taken home to my Creditor's house and his fireside.

[1] Quarrels.
[2] Attach.
[3] Seize upon the impounded property.
[4] Auctioned.

The Lord knoweth that if I could, I would sell myself without reversion to Christ. O sweet Lord Jesus, make a market, and overbid all my buyers! I dare swear, that there is a mystery in Christ which I never saw; a mystery of love. Oh, if[1] he would lay by the lap of the covering that is over it, and let my greening[2] soul see it! I would break the door, and be in upon him, to get my fill of love; for I am an hungered and famished soul. Oh, sir, if you, or any other would tell him, how sick my soul is, dying for want of a hearty draught of Christ's love! Oh, if[1] I could dote, (if I may make use of that word in this case,) as much upon himself as I do upon his love! It is a pity that Christ himself should not rather be my heart's choice, than Christ's manifested love. It would satisfy me, in some measure, if I had any bud[3] to give for his love. Shall I offer him my praises? Alas! he is more than praises. I give it over to get him exalted according to his worth, which is above what can be known.

Yet all this time I am tempting him, to see if there be both love and anger in him against me. I am plucked from his flock, (dear to me,) and from feeding his lambs; I go, therefore, in sackcloth as one who hath lost the wife of his youth. Grief and sorrow are suspicious, and spew out against him the smoke of jealousies;[4] and I say often, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me. Tell me, O Lord, read the process against me." But I know that I cannot answer his allegations; I shall lose the cause, when it cometh to open pleading. Oh, if[1] I could force my heart to believe dreams to be dreams! Yet when Christ giveth my fears the lie, and saith to me, "Thou art a liar," then I am glad. I resolve to hope to be quiet, and to lye on the brink, on my side, till the water fall, and the ford be ridable:[5] and howbeit there be pain upon me, in longing for deliverance that I may speak of him in the great congregation; yet I think there is joy in that pain and on-waiting; and even rejoice that he putteth me off for a time, and shifteth me. Oh, if[1] I could wait on for all eternity, howbeit I should never get my soul's desire, so being he were glorified! I would wish my pain and my ministry could live long to serve him! for I know that I am a clay vessel, and made for his use. Oh, if[1] my very broken sherds could serve to glorify him! I desire Christ's grace to be willingly content, that my hell, (excepting his hatred and displeasure, which I put out of all play, for submission to this is not called for,) were a preaching of his glory to men and angels forever and ever! When all is done, what can I add to him? or what can such a clay shadow as I do? I know that he needeth not me. I have cause to be grieved, and to melt away in tears, (if I had grace to do it,—Lord grant it to me!) to see my Well-beloved's fair face spitted upon by dogs, to see louns[6] pulling the crown off my royal King's head: to see my Harlot-mother and my sweet Father agree so ill, that they are going to skail,[7] and give up

[1] Oh, that. [2] Longing greedily. [3] Bribe.
[4] Suspicions. [5] May be crossed on horseback.
[6] Low, worthless scoundrels. [7] Separate.

house:—my Lord's palace is now a nest of unclean birds. Oh, if[1] harlot, harlot Scotland would rue upon her provoked Lord; and pity her good Husband, who is broken with her whorish heart! but these things are hid from her eyes.

I have heard of late of your new trial by the Bishop of Galloway. Fear not clay and worms' meat. Let truth and Christ get no wrong in your hand: it is your gain if Christ be glorified: and your glory to be Christ's witness. I persuade you, that your sufferings are Christ's advantage and victory; for he is pleased to reckon them so. Let me hear from you. Christ is but winning a clean kirk out of the fire; he will win this play. He will not be in your common[2] for any charges ye are at in his service. He is not poor to sit in your debt; he will repay an hundred fold more, it may be, even in this life.

The prayers and blessing of Christ's prisoner be with you.

Your brother, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXVI.

TO MY LADY BOYD.

Madam,—Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be multiplied upon you.

I have reasoned with your son at large—I rejoice to see him set his face in the right airth,[3] now when the nobles love the sunny-side of the Gospel best, and are afraid that Christ want soldiers, and shall not be able to do for himself.

Madam, our debts of obligation to Christ are not small; the freedom of grace and of salvation is the wonder of men and angels; but mercy in our Lord scorneth hire. Ye are bound to lift Christ on high, who hath given you eyes to discern the Devil, now coming out in his whites, and the idolatry and apostasy of the time well washen[4] with fair pretences; but the skin is black, and the water foul. It were art, I confess, to wash a black devil, and make him white.

I am in strange ups and downs, and seven times a day I lose ground. I am put often to swimming, and again my feet are set on the Rock that is higher than myself. He hath now let me see four things which I never saw before:—1st, That the supper shall be great cheer, that is, up in the great hall, with the royal King of glory, when the four-hours,[5] the standing-drink,[6] in this dreary wilderness is so sweet. When he bloweth a kiss afar off to his poor, heart-broken mourners in Zion, and sendeth me but his hearty commendations till we meet, I am confounded with wonder to think what it shall be when the Fairest among the sons of men

[1] Oh, that.
[2] Under obligation to you.
[3] Direction, point of the compass.
[4] Washed.
[5] Slight afternoon repast.
[6] A draught given to a person at the door.

shall lay a king's sweet, soft cheek to the sinful cheeks of poor sinners. O, time, time, go swiftly, and hasten that day! Sweet Lord Jesus, post! come flying like a young hart or a roe upon the mountains of separation. I think that we should tell the hours carefully, and look often how low the sun is; for love hath no ho;[1] it is pained, pained in itself, till it come into grips with[2] the party beloved.

2ndly, I find Christ's absence to be love's sickness and love's death. The wind that bloweth out of the airth,[3] where my Lord Jesus reigneth, is sweet-smelled, soft, joyful, and heartsome[4] to a soul burnt with absence. It is a painful battle for a soul sick of love to fight with absence and delays. Christ's "Not yet," is a stounding[5] of all the limbs and liths[6] of the soul. A nod of his head, when he is under a mask, would be half a pawn: to say, "Fool, what aileth thee? he is coming," would be life to a dead man. I am often in my dumb Sabbaths seeking a new plea[7] with my Lord Jesus—God forgive me—and I care not if there be not two or three ounce-weight of black wrath in my cup.

3rdly, For the third thing, I have seen my abominable vileness: if I were well known, there would none in this kingdom ask how I do. Many take my ten to be a hundred, but I am a deeper hypocrite, and shallower professor, than every one believeth, God knoweth I feign not: but I think my reckonings on the one page written in great letters, and his mercy to such a forlorn and wretched dyvour[8] on the other, to be more than a miracle. If I could get my finger-ends upon a full assurance, I trow that I would grip[9] fast; but my cup wanteth not gall; and, upon my part, despair might be almost excused, if every one in this land saw my inner side; but I know that I am one of them who have made great sale, and a free market to free grace. If I could be saved, as I would fain believe, sure I am that I have given Christ's blood, his free grace, and the bowels of his mercy, a large field to work upon, and Christ hath manifested his art, I dare not say to the uttermost; (for he can, if he would, forgive all the devils and damned reprobates, in respect of the wideness of his mercy;) but I say, to an admirable degree.

4thly, I am stricken with fear of unthankfulness. This apostate Kirk hath played the harlot with many lovers. They are spitting in the face of my lovely King, and mocking him, and I dow not[10] mend it; and they are running away from Christ in troops, and I dow not[10] mourn and be grieved for it. I think Christ lieth like an old forcasten[11] castle, forsaken of the inhabitants; all men run away now from him. Truth, innocent truth, goeth mourning and wringing her hands, in sackcloth and ashes. Wo, wo is me, for the Virgin-daughter of Scotland! Wo, wo to the inhabitants of this land! for they are gone back with a perpetual backsliding.

1 Self-control.
2 Into the embrace of.
3 Direction, point of the compass.
4 Cheering.
5 A causing of a sudden pang.
6 Joints.
7 Controversy.
8 Bankrupt.
9 Gripe.
10 Am not able.
11 Neglected.

These things take me so up, that a borrowed bed, another man's fireside, the wind upon my face, (I being driven from my lovers, and dear acquaintance, and my poor flock,) find no room in my sorrow. I have no spare or odd sorrow for these; only I think that the sparrows and swallows that build their nests in the kirk of Anwoth, are blessed birds. Nothing hath given my faith a harder back-set[1] till it crack again, than my closed mouth. But let me be miserable myself alone, God keep my dear brethren from it. But still I keep breath, and when my royal, and never, never-enough praised King returneth to his sinful prisoner, I ride upon the high places of Jacob, I divide Shechem, I triumph in his strength. If this kingdom would glorify the Lord in my behalf, I desire to be weighed in God's even balance in this point, if I think not my wages paid to the full; I shall crave no more hire of Christ.

Madam, pity me in this, and help me to praise him; for whatever I be, the chief of sinners, a devil, and a most guilty devil, yet it is the apple of Christ's eye, his honor and glory, as the Head of the Church, that I suffer for now, and that I will go to eternity with.

I am greatly in love with Mr. M. M.; I see him stamped with the image of God. I hope well of your son, my Lord Boyd.

Your Ladyship and your children have a prisoner's prayers. Grace, grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, May 1, 1637.

LETTER CLXVII.

TO HIS REV., AND DEAR BROTHER, MR. DAVID DICKSON.

My Reverend, and Dear Brother,—I fear that ye have never known me well. If ye saw my inner side, it is possible that ye would pity me, but you would hardly give me either love or respect: men mistake me the whole length of the heavens; my sins prevail over me, and the terrors of their guiltiness. I am put often to ask, if Christ and I ever did shake hands together in earnest; I mean not that my feast-days are quite gone, but I am made of extremes. I pray God that ye never have the woful and dreary experience of a closed mouth; for then ye shall judge the sparrows, that may sing in the church of Irvine, blessed birds. But my soul hath been refreshed and watered, when I hear of your courage and zeal for your never-enough praised, praised Master, in that ye put the men of God, chased out of Ireland, to work. Oh, if[2] I could confirm you! I dare say in God's presence, "That this shall never hasten your suffering, but will be David Dickson's feast, and speaking joy, that while he had time and leis-

[1] Relapse. [2] Oh, that.

ure, he put many to work, to lift up Jesus, his sweet Master, high in the skies." O man of God, go on, go on, be valiant for that Plant of renown, for that Chief among ten thousands, for that Prince of the kings of the earth. It is but little that I know of God, yet this I dare write, that Christ will be glorified in David Dickson, howbeit Scotland be not gathered.

I am pained, pained that I have not more to give my sweet Bridegroom: his comforts to me are not dealt with a niggard's hand, but I would fain learn not to idolize comfort, sense, joy, and sweet, felt presence. All these are but creatures, and nothing but the kingly robe, the gold ring, and the bracelets of the Bridegroom: the Bridegroom himself is better than all the ornaments that are about him. Now, I would not so much have these, as God himself, and to be swallowed up of love to Christ. I see that in delighting in a communion with Christ, we may make more gods than one; but however, all was but bairns' play between Christ and me, till now. If one would have sworn unto me, I would not have believed what may be found in Christ. I hope that ye pity my pain that[1] much, in my prison, as to help me yourself, and to cause others help me, a dyvour,[2] a sinful wretched dyvour,[2] to pay some of my debts of praise to my great King. Let my God be judge and witness, if my soul would not have sweet ease and comfort, to have many hearts confirmed in Christ, and enlarged with his love, and many tongues set on work to set on high my royal and princely Well-beloved. Oh, that my sufferings could pay tribute to such a king! I have given over wondering at his love; for Christ hath manifested a piece of art upon me, that I never revealed to any living; he hath gotten fair and rich employment, and sweet sale, and a goodly market for his honorable calling of showing mercy, on me the chief of sinners. Every one knoweth not so well as I do, my wofully often broken covenants. My sins against light, working in the very act of sinning, have been met with admirable mercy: but, alas! he will get nothing back again, but wretched unthankfulness. I am sure, that if Christ pity anything in me next to my sin, it is pain of love for an armful and soulful of himself, in faith, love, and begun fruition. My sorrow is that I cannot get Christ lifted off the dust in Scotland, and set on high, above all the skies, and Heaven of heavens.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, May 1, 1637.

LETTER CLXVIII.

TO THE LAIRD[3] OF CARLTON.

Worthy Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter, and am heartily glad that our Lord hath begun to work

[1] So. [2] A bankrupt. [3] A proprietor of lands or houses.

for the apparent delivery of this oppressed Kirk;—Oh that salvation would come for Zion!

I am for the present hanging by hope, waiting what my Lord will do with me, and if it will please my sweet Master to send me amongst you again, and keep out a hireling from my poor people, and flock. It were my heaven till I come home, even to spend this life in gathering in some to Christ. I have still great heaviness for my silence, and my forced standing idle in the market, when this land hath such a plentiful thick harvest; but I know that His judgments, who hath done it, are past finding out. I have no knowledge to take up the Lord, in all his strange ways, and passages of deep and unsearchable providences; for the Lord is before me, and I am so bemisted that I cannot follow him; he is behind me, and following at the heels, and I am not aware of him; he is above me, but his glory so dazzleth my twilight of short knowledge, that I cannot look up to him; he is upon my right hand, and I see him not; he is upon my left hand, and within me, and goeth and cometh, and his going and coming are a dream to me; he is round about me, and compasseth all my goings, and still I have him to seek; he is every way higher, and deeper, and broader than the shallow and ebb[1] hand-breadth of my short and dim light can take up; and, therefore, I would that my heart could be silent, and sit down in the learnedly-ignorant wondering at that Lord, whom men and angels cannot comprehend. I know that the noon-day light of the highest angels, who see him face to face, seeth not the borders of his infiniteness. They apprehend God near-hand,[2] but they cannot comprehend him. And, therefore, it is my happiness to look afar off, and to come near to the Lord's back parts, and to light my dark candle at his brightness, and to have leave to sit and content myself with a traveller's light, without the clear vision of an enjoyer. I would seek no more till I were in my country, than a little watering and sprinkling of a withered soul, with some half-out-breakings and half-out-lookings of the beams, and small ravishing smiles of the fairest face of a revealed and believed-on Godhead. A little of God would make my soul bank-full.[3] Oh that I had but Christ's odd off-fallings; that he would let but the meanest of his love-rays and love-beams fall from him, so as I might gather and carry them with me! I would not be ill[4] to please with Christ, and veiled visions of Christ; neither would I be dainty in seeing and enjoying of him: a kiss of Christ blown over his shoulder, the parings and crumbs of glory that fall under his table in Heaven, a shower like a thin May-mist of his love, would make me green, and sappy, and joyful, till the summer-sun of an eternal glory break up.[5] Oh that I had anything of Christ! Oh that I had a sip, or half a drop, out of the hollow of Christ's hand, of the sweetness and excellency of that lovely One! Oh that my Lord Jesus would rue upon me, and give me but the meanest alms of felt and believed

[1] Exceeding shallow. [2] At hand. [3] Full from bank to bank.
[4] Difficult, hard. [5] Arise.

salvation! Oh, how little were it for that infinite Fountain of love and joy, to fill as many thousand thousands of little vessels, the like of me, as there are minutes of hours since the creation of God! I find[1] it true, that a poor soul finding[2] half a smell of the Godhead of Christ, hath desires paining and wounding the poor heart so, with longings to be up at him, that make it sometimes think, were it not better never to have felt anything of Christ, than thus to lye dying twenty deaths, under these felt wounds, for the want of him! "Oh, where is he? O Fairest, where dwellest thou? O never-enough admired Godhead, how can clay win[3] up to thee? how can creatures of yesterday be able to enjoy thee!" Oh, what pain is it, that time and sin should be so many thousand miles betwixt a loved and longed-for Lord, and a dwining[4] and love-sick soul, who would rather than all the world have lodging, with Christ! Oh, let this bit of love of ours, this inch and half-span length of heavenly longing, meet with thy infinite love! Oh, if[5] the little I have were swallowed up with the infiniteness of that excellency which is in Christ! Oh that we little ones were in at the greatest Lord Jesus! Our wants should soon be swallowed up with his fulness.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, May 1, 1637.

LETTER CLXIX.

TO ROBERT GORDON, OF KNOCKBREX.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter from Edinburgh.

I would not wish to see another heaven, whill I get mine own heaven, but a new moon like the light of the sun, and a new sun like the light of seven days shining upon my poor self, and the church of Jews and Gentiles, and upon my withered and sunburnt Mother, the Church of Scotland, and upon her sister-churches, England and Ireland; and to have this done, to the setting on high of our great King: it maketh not, howbeit I were separate from Christ, and had a sense of ten thousand years' pain in Hell, if this were. Oh, blessed nobility! Oh, glorious, renowned gentry! Oh, blessed were the tribes in this land, to wipe my Lord Jesus's weeping face, and to take the sackcloth off Christ's loins, and to put his kingly robes upon him! Oh, if[5] the Almighty would take no less wages of me than my heaven to have it done! but my fears are still for wrath once upon Scotland. But I know that her day will clear up, and that glory shall be upon the top of the mountains, and joy at the noise of the married wife,

[1] Feel. [2] Feeling. [3] Reach.
[4] Pining. [5] Oh, that.

once again. Oh that our Lord would make us to contend, and plead, and wrestle by prayers and tears, for our Husband's restoring of his forfeited heritage in Scotland.

Dear brother, I am for the present in no small battle, betwixt felt guiltiness, and pining longings and high fevers for my Well-beloved's love! Alas! I think that Christ's love playeth the niggard to me, and I know it is not for scarcity of love—there is enough in him—but my hunger prophesieth of in-holding and sparingness in Christ; for I have but little of him, and little of his sweetness. It is a dear summer with me; yet there is such joy in the eagerness and working of hunger for Christ that I am often at this, that if I had no other heaven, than a continual hunger for Christ, such a heaven of ever-working hunger, were still a heaven to me. I am sure that Christ's love cannot be cruel; it must be a ruing, a pitying, a melting-hearted love: but suspension of that love, I think half a hell, and the want of it more than a whole hell. When I look to my guiltiness, I see that my salvation is one of our Saviour's greatest miracles, either in Heaven or earth: I am sure I may defy any man to show me a greater wonder. But seeing I have no wares, no hire, no money for Christ, he must either take me with want, misery, corruption, or then[1] want me. Oh, if[2] he would be pleased to be compassionate and pitiful-hearted to my pining fevers of longing for him; or then give me a real pawn to keep, out of his own hand, till God send a meeting betwixt him and me! But I find neither as yet; howbeit he who is absent be not cruel nor unkind, yet his absence is cruel and unkind. His love is like itself; his love is his love; but the covering and the cloud, the veil and the mask of his love, is more wise than kind, if I durst speak my apprehensions. I lead no process now against the suspension and delay of God's love. I would with all my heart frist[3] till a day ten heavens, and the sweet manifestations of his love. Certainly I think that I could give Christ much on his word: but my whole pleading is about intimated and borne-in assurance of his love. Oh, if he would persuade me of my heart's desire of his love at all, he should have the term-day of payment at his own making. But I know that raving unbelief speaketh its pleasure, while it looketh upon guiltiness and this body of corruption. Oh, how loathsome and burdensome is it to carry about a dead corpse, this old carrion of corruption! Oh how steadable[4] a thing is a Saviour, to make a sinner rid of his chains and fetters!

I have now made a new question, whether Christ be more to be loved for giving sanctification or for free justification? And I hold that he is more and most to be loved for sanctification. It is in some respect greater love in him, to sanctify, than to justify; for he maketh us most like himself, in his own essential portraiture and image in sanctifying us. Justification doth but make us happy, which is to be like angels only; neither is it such a misery

[1] Otherwise. [2] Oh, that. [3] Postpone. [4] Available.

to lye a condemned man, and under unforgiven guiltiness, as to serve sin, and work the works of the Devil; and, therefore, I think sanctification cannot be bought, it is above price. God be thanked forever, that Christ was a told-down price for sanctification. Let a sinner (if possible) lye in hell forever, if he make him truly holy, and let him lye there burning in love to God, rejoicing in the Holy Ghost, hanging upon Christ by faith and hope; that is heaven in the heart and bottom of Hell.

Alas! I find a very thin harvest here, and few to be saved.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his lovely and longed-for Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXX.

TO THE LAIRD OF MONCRIEFF.

Much Honored Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—Although not acquainted, yet at the desire of your worthy sister, the Lady Leys, and upon the report of your kindness to Christ and his oppressed truth, I am bold to write to you, earnestly desiring you to join with us, (so many as in these bounds profess Christ,) to wrestle with God, one day of the week, especially the Wednesday, for mercy to this fallen and decayed Kirk, and to such as suffer for Christ's name, and for your own necessities, and the necessities of others, who are by covenant engaged in that business. For we have no other armor in these evil times but prayers, now when wrath from the Lord is gone out against this backsliding land; for ye know we can have no true public fasts, neither are the true causes of our humiliation ever laid before the people.

Now, very worthy sir, I am glad in the Lord, that the Lord reserveth any of your place, or of note, in this time of common apostasy, to come forth in public to bear Christ's name before men, when the great men think Christ a cumbersome neighbor, and that religion carrieth hazards, trials, and persecutions with it. I persuade myself that it is your glory and your garland, and shall be your joy in the day of Christ, and the standing of your house and seed to inherit the earth, that you truly and sincerely profess Christ:—neither is our King, whom the Father hath crowned in Mount Zion, so weak, that he cannot do for himself, and his own cause. I verily believe that they are blessed who can hold the crown upon his head, and carry up the train of his robe royal, and that he shall be victorious and triumph in this land. It is our part to back our royal King, howbeit there were not six in all the land to follow him. It is our wisdom now to take up, and discern the Devil and the Antichrist coming out in their whites, and the apostasy and idolatry of this land washen[1] with

[1] Washed.

foul water:—I confess that it is art to wash the Devil till his skin be white.

For myself, sir, I have bought a plea[1] against Christ, since I came hither, in judging my princely Master angry at me, because I was cast out of the vineyard as a withered tree, my dumb Sabbaths working me much sorrow: but I see now that sorrow hath not eyes to read love written upon the cross of Christ; and, therefore, I pass from my rash plea.[1] Wo, wo is me, that I should have received a slander of Christ's love to my soul! And for all this, my Lord Jesus hath forgiven all, as not willing to be heard with such a fool; and is content to be, as it were, confined with me, and to bear me company, and to feast a poor oppressed prisoner. And now I write it under my hand, worthy sir, that I think well and honorably of this cross of Christ. I wonder that he will take any glory from the like of me. I find when he but sendeth his hearty commendations to me, and but bloweth a kiss afar off, I am confounded with wondering what the supper of the Lamb will be, up in our Father's dining-palace of glory, since the four-hours[2] in this dismal wilderness, and when in prisons, and in our sad days a kiss of Christ are so comfortable. Oh, how sweet and glorious shall our case be, when that fairest among the sons of men will lay his fair face to our now sinful faces, and wipe away all tears from our eyes! O time, time, run swiftly and hasten this day! O sweet Lord Jesus, come flying like a roe or a young hart! Alas! that we, blind fools, are fallen in love with moonshine and shadows. How sweet is the wind that bloweth out of the airth[3] where Christ is! Every day we may see some new thing in Christ: his love hath neither brim nor bottom. Oh, if[4] I had help to praise him! He knoweth that if my sufferings glorify his name, and encourage others to stand fast for the honor of our supreme Lawgiver, Christ, my wages then are paid to the full. Sir, help me to love that never enough praised Lord. I find now, that the faith of the saints, under suffering for Christ, is fair before the wind, and with full sails carried upon Christ: and I hope to lose nothing in this furnace but dross; for Christ can triumph in a weaker man than I am, if there be any such; and when all is done, his love paineth me, and leaveth me under such debt to Christ, as I can neither pay principal nor interest. Oh, if[4] he would comprise[5] myself, and if I were sold to him as a bond-man, and that he would take me home to his house and fireside; for I have nothing to render to him! Then, after me, let no man think hard of Christ's sweet cross; for I would not exchange my sighs with the painted laughter of all my adversaries. I desire grace and patience to wait on, and to lie upon the brink, till the water fill and flow. I know that he is fast coming.

Sir, ye will excuse my boldness; and, till it please God that I

[1] Controversy.
[2] Slight afternoon refreshment.
[3] Quarter, point of the compass.
[4] Oh, that.
[5] Attach.

see you, ye have the prayers of a prisoner of Christ; to whom I recommend you, and in whom I rest,

Yours, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, May 14, 1637.

LETTER CLXXI.

TO JOHN CLARK.

Loving Brother,—Hold fast Christ without wavering, and contend for the faith, because Christ is not easily gotten nor kept. The lazy professor hath put Heaven, as it were, at the very next door, and thinketh to fly up to Heaven in his bed, and in a night dream; but, truly, that is not so easy a thing as most men believe; Christ himself did sweat ere he wan this city, howbeit he was the free-born Heir. It is Christianity, my heart, to be sincere, unfeigned, honest, and upright-hearted before God; and to live and serve God, suppose there was not one man nor woman in all the world dwelling beside you, to eye you. Any little grace that ye have, see that it be sound and true. Ye may put a difference betwixt you and reprobates, if ye have these marks:—1. If ye prize Christ and his truth so as ye will sell all and buy him, and suffer for it. 2. If the love of Christ keepeth you back from sinning, more than the law, or fear of Hell. 3. If ye be humble, and deny your own will, wit, credit, ease, honor, the world, and the vanity and glory of it. 4. Your profession must not be barren and void of good works. 5. Ye must in all things aim at God's honor; ye must eat, drink, sleep, buy, sell, sit, stand, speak, pray, read, and hear the word, with a heart-purpose that God may be honored. 6. Ye must show yourself an enemy to sin, and reprove the works of darkness, such as drunkenness, swearing, and lying, albeit the company should hate you for so doing. 7. Keep in mind the truth of God, that ye heard me teach, and have nothing to do with the corruptions and new guises entered into the house of God. 8. Make conscience of your calling, in covenants, in buying and selling. 9. Acquaint yourself with daily praying; commit all your ways and actions to God, by prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving; and count not much of being mocked; for Christ Jesus was mocked before you.

Persuade yourself that this is the way of peace and comfort which I now suffer for. I dare go to death and into eternity with it, though men may possibly seek another way. Remember me in your prayers, and the state of this oppressed Church. Grace be with you.

Your soul's well-wisher, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXXII.

TO CARDONESS, ELDER.

Much Honored Sir,—I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I wonder that ye write not to me; for the Holy Ghost beareth me witness, that I cannot, I dare not, I dow not[1] forget you, nor the souls of those with you, who are redeemed by the blood of the great Shepherd: ye are in my heart in the night-watches; ye are my joy and crown in the day of Christ. O Lord, bear me witness, if my soul thirsteth for anything out of Heaven, more than for your salvation: let God lay me in an even balance, and try me in this.

Love Heaven, let your heart be on it. Up, up, and visit the new land, and view the fair city, and the white throne, and the Lamb, the bride's Husband, in the Bridegroom's clothes, sitting on it. It were time that your soul cast itself, and all your burdens, upon Christ. I beseech you, by the wounds of your Redeemer, and by your compearance[2] before him, and by the salvation of your soul, lose no more time; run fast, for it is late: God hath sworn by himself, who made the world and time, that time shall be no more, (Rev. x.) Ye are now upon the very border of the other life; your Lord cannot be blamed for not giving you warning. I have taught the truth of Christ to you, and delivered unto you the whole counsel of God; and I have stood before the Lord for you, and I will yet still stand. Awake, awake to do righteously. Think not to be eased of the burdens and debts that are on your house, by oppressing any, or being rigorous to those that are under you. Remember how I endeavored to walk before you in this matter, as an example. "Behold, here am I, witness against me, before the Lord and his Anointed, whose ox or whose ass have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed?" Who knoweth how my soul feedeth upon a good conscience, when I remember how I spent this body in feeding the lambs of Christ?

At my first entry hither, I grant, I took a stomach against my Lord, because he had casten me over the dyke[3] of the vineyard, as a dry tree, and would have no more of my service; my dumb Sabbaths broke my heart, and I would not be comforted; but now He whom my soul loveth is come again, and it pleaseth him to feast me with the kisses of his love. A king dineth with me, and his spikenard casteth a sweet smell. The Lord my witness is above, that I write my heart to you. I never knew, by my nine years' preaching, so much of Christ's love, as he has taught me in Aberdeen, by six months' imprisonment. I charge you in Christ's name to help me to praise; and show that people and country the loving-kindness of the Lord to my soul, that so my sufferings may

[1] Am not able. [2] Appearance. [3] Wall.

someway preach to them when I am silent. He hath made me to know now, better than before, what it is to be crucified to the world. I would not now give a drink of cold water for all the world's kindness. I owe no service to it. I am not the flesh's debtor. My Lord Jesus hath dawted [1] his prisoner, and hath thoughts of love concerning me. I would not exchange my sighs with the laughing of adversaries. Sir, I write this to inform you, that ye may know that it is the truth of Christ I now suffer for, and that he hath sealed my suffering with the comforts of his Spirit on my soul—and know that he putteth not his seal upon blank paper.

Now, sir, I have no comfort earthly, but to know that I have espoused, and shall present a bride to Christ in that congregation. The Lord hath given you much, and, therefore, he will require much of you again. Number your talents, and see what you have to render back—ye cannot be enough persuaded of the shortness of your time. I charge you to write to me, and in the fear of God, to be plain with me, whether or not ye have made your salvation sure. I am confident, and hope the best; but I know that your reckonings with your Judge are many and deep. Sir, be not beguiled, neglect not your one thing, (Phil. iii. 13,) your one necessary thing, (Luke x. 42,) the good part that shall not be taken from you. Look beyond time. Things here are but moonshine: they have but children's wit, who are delighted with shadows, and deluded with feathers flying in the air. Desire your children, in the morning of their life, to begin and seek the Lord, and to remember their Creator in the days of their youth; (Eccles. xii. 1,) to cleanse their way, by taking heed thereto, according to God's word, Ps. cxix. 9. Youth is a glassy age. Satan finds a swept chamber, for the most part, in youthhood, and a garnished lodging for himself and his train. Let the Lord have the flower of their age; the best sacrifice is due to him. Instruct them in this, that they have a soul, and that this life is nothing in comparison of eternity. They will have much need of God's conduct in this world, to guide them by [2] those rocks upon which most men split; but far more need when it cometh to the hour of death, and their compearance [3] before Christ. Oh that there were such a heart in them, to fear the name of the great and dreadful God, who hath laid up great things for those that love and fear him! I pray that God may be their portion. Show others of my parishioners, that I write to them my best wishes, and the blessings of their lawful pastor. Say to them from me, "That I beseech them, by the bowels of Christ, to keep in mind the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ, which I taught them; that so they may lay hold on eternal life, striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and making sure salvation to themselves. Walk in love, and do righteousness: seek peace: love one another: wait for the coming of our Master and Judge. Receive no doctrine contrary to that which I delivered to you. If ye fall away and

[1] Fondled. [2] Past. [3] Appearance.

forget it and that Catechism which I taught you, and so forsake your own mercy, the Lord be judge betwixt you and me. I take Heaven and earth to witness, that such shall eternally perish: but if they serve the Lord, great will their reward be, when they and I shall stand before our Judge. Set forward up the mountain, to meet with God; climb up, for your Saviour calleth on you. It may be that God will call you to your rest, when I am far from you; but ye have my love, and the desires of my heart, for your soul's welfare. He that is holy, keep you from falling, and establish you till his own glorious appearance.

Your affectionate and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXXIII.

TO CARDONESS, YOUNGER.

Much Honored Sir,—I long to hear whether or not your soul be hand-fasted with[1] Christ. Lose your time no longer: flee the follies of youth: gird up the loins of your mind, and make you ready for meeting the Lord. I have often summoned you, and now I summon you again, to compear[2] before your Judge to make a reckoning of your life. While ye have time, look upon your papers, and consider your ways. Oh that there were such an heart in you, as to think what an ill-conscience will be to you, when ye are upon the border of eternity, and your one foot out of time! Oh then, ten thousand thousand floods of tears cannot extinguish these flames, or purchase to you one hour's release from that pain! Oh, how sweet a day have ye had! But this is a fair day that runneth fast away: see how ye have spent it, and consider the necessity of salvation; and tell me, in the fear of God, if ye have made it sure. I am persuaded, that ye have a conscience that will be speaking somewhat to you. Why will ye die and destroy yourself? I charge you, in Christ's name, to rouse up your conscience and begin to indent and contract with Christ in time, while salvation is in your offer. This is the accepted time, this is the day of salvation. Play the merchant, for ye cannot expect another market-day when this is done. Therefore, let me again beseech you, to consider, in this your day, the things that belong to your peace, before they be hid from your eyes. Dear brother, fulfil my joy, and begin to seek the Lord while he may be found: forsake the follies of deceiving and vain youth: lay hold upon eternal life. Whoring, night-drinking, and the misspending of the Sabbath, and neglecting of prayer in your house, and refusing of an offered salvation, will burn up your soul with the terrors of the Almighty, when your awakened conscience shall flee in your face. Be kind and loving to your wife: make con-

[1] Affianced to.

[2] To appear in obedience to a legal citation.

science of cherishing her, and not be rigidly austere. Sir, I have not a tongue to express the glory that is laid up for you, in your Father's house, if you reform your doings, and frame your heart to return to the Lord. Ye know that this world is but a shadow, a short-living creature, under the law of time. Within less than fifty years, when ye look back to it, ye shall laugh at the evanishing vanities thereof, as feathers flying in the air, and as the houses of sand within the sea-mark, which the children of men are building. Give up with courting of this vain world; seek not the bastard's movables, but the son's heritage in Heaven. Take a trial of Christ. Look unto him, and his love will so change you, that ye shall be taken with him, and never choose to go from him. I have experience of his sweetness, in this house of my pilgrimage here. My Witness, who is above, knoweth that I would not exchange my sighs and tears, with the laughing of the Fourteen Prelates. There is nothing that will make you a Christian indeed, but a taste of the sweetness of Christ. "Come and see," will speak best to your soul. I would fain hope good of you. Be not discouraged at broken and spilled[1] resolutions; but to it, and to it again. Woo about Christ, till ye get your soul espoused as a chaste virgin to him. Use the means of profiting with your conscience, pray in your family, and read the word. Remember how our Lord's day was spent when I was among you; it will be a great challenge[2] to you before God, if ye forget the good that was done within the walls of your house on the Lord's day, and if ye turn aside after the fashions of this world, and if ye go not in time to the kirk, to wait on the public worship of God, and if ye tarry not at it, till all the exercises of religion be ended. Give God some of your time both morning and evening, and afternoon; and in so doing, rejoice the heart of a poor oppressed prisoner. Rue upon your own soul, and from your heart fear the Lord.

Now He that brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of his sheep, by the blood of the Eternal Covenant, establish your heart with his grace, and present you before his presence with joy.

Your affectionate, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXXIV.

TO MY LORD CRAIGHALL.

My Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am not only content, but I exceedingly rejoice, that I find any of the rulers of this land, and especially your lordship, so to affect Christ and his truth, as that ye dare, for his name, come to yea and nay with monarchs in their face. I hope that He who hath enabled you for that, will give more, if ye show yourself courageous, and, (as

[1] Spoiled. [2] Accusation.

his word speaketh,) a man in the streets for the Lord. But I pray your lordship, give me leave to be plain with you, as one who loveth both your honor and your soul. I verily believe that there was never idolatry at Rome, never idolatry condemned in God's word by the prophets, if religious kneeling before a consecrated creature, standing in room of Christ crucified, in that very act, and that for reverence of the elements, (as our Act cleareth,) be not idolatry. Neither will your intention help, which is not of the essence of worship; for then, Aaron, saying "To-morrow shall be a feast for Jehovah," that is, for the Golden Calf, should not have been guilty of idolatry; for he intended only to decline the lash of the people's fury, not to honor the Calf. Your intention to honor Christ is nothing, seeing that religious kneeling, by God's institution, doth necessarily import religious and divine adoration, suppose that our intention were both dead and sleeping: otherwise kneeling before the image of God, and directing prayer to God, were lawful, if our intention go right. My Lord, I cannot in these bounds dispute; but if Cambridge and Oxford, and the learning of Britain, will answer this argument, and the argument from active scandal, which your lordship seemeth to stand upon, I will turn a formalist, and call myself an arrant fool, by doing what I have done, in my suffering for this truth. I do much reverence Mr. L.'s learning; but, my Lord, I will answer what he writeth in that to pervert you from the truth; else repute me, beside an hypocrite, an ass also. I hope ye shall see something upon that subject, if the Lord permit, that no sophistry in Britain shall answer. Courtiers' arguments, for the most part, are drawn from their own skin, and are not worth a straw for your conscience. A marquis's or a king's word, when ye stand before Christ's tribunal, shall be lighter than the wind. The Lord knoweth that I love your true honor, and the standing of your house; but I would not that your honor or house were established upon sand, and hay, and stubble. But let me, my very dear, and worthy Lord, most humbly beseech you, by the mercies of God, by the consolations of his Spirit, by the dear blood and wounds of your lovely Redeemer, by the salvation of your soul, by your compearance[1] before the awful face of a sin-revenging and dreadful Judge, not to set in comparison together your soul's peace, Christ's love, and his kingly honor, now called in question, with your place, honor, house, or ease, that an inch of time will make out of the way. I verily believe that Christ is now begging a testimony of you, and is saying, "And will ye also leave me?" It is possible that the wind shall not blow so fair for you all your life, for coming out and appearing before others to back and countenance Christ, the Fairest among the sons of men, the Prince of the kings of the earth, (Isa. li. 7,) "Fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings." (Ver. 8,) "For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool." When the Lord will begin, he will make an end, and mow down his adversaries;

[1] Appearance.

and they shall lie before him like withered hay, and their bloom be shaken off them. Consider how many thousands in this kingdom ye shall cause to fall and stumble, if ye go with them; and that ye shall be out of the prayers of many who do stand before the Lord for you and your house; and, further, when the time of your accounts cometh, and your one foot shall be within the border of eternity, and the eye-strings shall break, and the face wax pale, and the poor soul shall look out at the windows of the house of clay, longing to be out, and ye shall find yourself arraigned before the Judge of quick and dead, to answer for your putting to your hand with the rest, confederated against Christ, to the overturning of his Ark, and the loosing of the pins of Christ's tabernacle in this land, and shall certainly see yourself mired in a course of apostasy; then, then a king's favor and your worm-eaten honor shall be miserable comforters to you. The Lord hath enlightened you with the knowledge of his will; and as the Lord liveth, they lead you and others to a communion with Great Babel, the Mother of fornications; and God said of old, and continueth to say the same to you, "Come out of her, my people, lest ye be partakers of her plagues." Will ye, then, go with them, and set your lip to the Whore's golden cup, and drink of the wine of the wrath of God Almighty with them? Oh, poor hungry honor! Oh, cursed pleasure! and, oh, damnable ease! bought with the loss of God! How many will pray for you! What a sweet presence shall ye find of Christ under your sufferings, if ye will lay down your honors and place at the feet of Christ!—what a fair recompense of reward! I avouch before the Lord, that I am now showing you a way how the house of Craighall may stand on sure pillars: if ye will set it on rotten pillars, ye cruelly wrong your posterity. Ye have the word of a King for an hundred fold more in this life, (if it be good for you,) and for life everlasting also. Make not Christ a liar, in distrusting his promise. Kings of clay cannot back you when you stand before him: a straw for them and their hungry heaven, that standeth on this side of time! a fig for the day's smile of a worm! Consider who have gone before you to eternity, and would have given a world for a new occasion of avouching that truth. It is true they call it not substantial, and we are made a scorn to those that are at ease, for suffering these things for it; but it is not time to judge of our losses by the morning: stay till the evening, and we will count with the best of them.

I have found by experience, since the time of my imprisonment, (my Witness is above,) that Christ is sealing this honorable cause with another, and a nearer fellowship than ever I knew before; and let God weigh me in an even balance in this, if I would exchange the cross of Christ or his truth, with the Fourteen Prelacies, or what else a king can give. My dear Lord, venture to take the wind on your face for Christ. I believe that if he should come from Heaven in his own person, and seek the charters of Craighall from you, and a dismission of your place, and ye saw his face, ye

would fall down at his feet and say, "Lord Jesus, it is too little for thee." If any man think it not a truth to die for, I am against him. I dare go to eternity with it, that this day the honor of our Lawgiver and King, in the government of his own free kingdom, (who should pay tribute to no dying king,) is the true state of the question. My Lord, be ye upon Christ's side of it, and take the word of a poor prisoner, nay the Lord Jesus be surety for it, that ye have incomparably made the wisest choice. For my own part, I have so been in this prison, that I would be half-ashamed to seek more till I be up at the well-head. Few know in this world the sweetness of Christ's breath, the excellency of his love, which hath neither brim nor bottom. The world hath raised a slander upon the cross of Christ, because they love to go to Heaven by dry land, and love not sea-storms; but I write it under my hand, (and would say more, if possibly a reader would not deem it hypocrisy,) that my obligation to Christ for the smell of his garments, for his love-kisses, these thirty weeks, standeth so great, that I should, and I desire also to choose to suspend my salvation, to have many tongues loosed in my behalf to praise him; and, suppose in person I never entered within the gates of the New Jerusalem, yet so being Christ may be set on high, and I had the liberty to cast my love and praises forever over the wall to Christ, I would be silent and content. But oh, he is more than my narrow praises! O time, time, flee[1] swiftly, that our communion with Christ may be perfected!

I wish that your lordship would urge Mr. L. to give his mind in the ceremonies; and be pleased to let me see it as quickly as can be, and it shall be answered.

To His rich grace I recommend your lordship, and shall remain,

Yours, at all respectful obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 8, 1637.

LETTER CLXXV.

TO JOHN LAURIE.

Dear Brother,—I am sorry that ye, or so many in this kingdom, should expect so much of me, an empty reed. Verily I am a noughty[2] and poor body; but if the tinkling of the iron chains of my Lord Jesus on legs and arms could sound the high praises of my royal King, whose prisoner I am, oh, how would my joy run over! If my Lord would bring edification to one soul by my bonds, I am satisfied; but I know not what to do to such a princely and beautiful Well-beloved; he is far behind with me.[3] Little thanks to me, to say to others that his wind bloweth on me, who am but withered and dry bones; but, since ye desire me to

[1] Fly.
[2] Being nothing.
[3] Hath not received from me nearly all his due.

write to you, either help me to set Christ on high, for his running-over love, in that the heat of his sweet breath hath melted a frozen heart, else I think that ye do nothing for a prisoner.

I am fully confirmed, that it is the honor of our[1] Lawgiver which I suffer for now. I am not ashamed to give out letters of recommendation of Christ's love, to as many as will extol the Lord Jesus and his cross. If I had not sailed this sea-way to Heaven, but had taken the land-way, as many do, I should not have known Christ's sweetness in such a measure; but the truth is, let no man thank me, for I caused not Christ's wind to blow upon me: his love came upon a withered creature, whether I would or not, (and yet by coming, it procured from me a welcome.) A heart of iron, and iron doors, will not hold Christ out. I give him leave to break iron locks and come in, and that is all; and now I know not, whether pain of love for want of possession, or sorrow that I cannot thank him, paineth me the most; but both work upon me. For the first—Oh that he would come and satisfy the longing soul, and fill the hungry with these good things! I know indeed that my guiltiness may be a bar in his way, but he is God, and ready to forgive. And for the other—Wo, wo is me, that I cannot find a heart to give back again my unworthy, little love, for his great sea-full of love to me! Oh, that he would learn me this piece of gratitude! Oh, that I could have leave to look in, through the hole of the door, to see his face and sing his praises! or could break up one of his chamber windows, to look in upon his delighting beauty, till my Lord send more!—any little communion with him, one of his love-looks, should be my begun heaven. I know that he is not lordly, neither is the Bridegroom's love proud, though I be black, and unlovely, and unworthy of him. I would seek but leave, and withal grace, to spend my love upon him. I counsel you to think highly of Christ, and of free, free grace, more than ye did before: for I know that Christ is not known amongst us. I think that I see more of Christ than ever I saw; and yet I see but little of what may be seen. Oh, that he would draw by[1] the curtains, and that the King would come out of his gallery and his palace, that I might see him! Christ's love is young glory and young heaven; it would soften Hell's pain to be filled with it. What would I refuse to suffer, if I could get but a draught of love at my heart's desire? Oh, what price can be given for him! Angels cannot weigh him. Oh, his weight, his worth, his sweetness, his overpassing beauty! If men and angels would come and look to that great and princely One, their ebbness[2] could never take up his depth, their narrowness could never comprehend his breadth, height, and length. If ten thousand thousand worlds of angels were created, they might all tire themselves in wondering at his beauty, and begin again to wonder of new. Oh, that I could win nigh[3] him, to kiss his feet, to hear his voice, to feel the smell of his ointments! But oh, alas, I have little, little of him! yet I long for more.

[1] Aside. [2] Shallowness. [3] Were able to come near.

Remember my bonds, and help me with your prayers; for I would not niffer[1] or exchange my sad hours with the joy of my velvet adversaries. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 10, 1637.

LETTER CLXXVI.

TO CARLTON.

WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter from my brother, to which I now answer particularly.

I confess two things of myself:—1st, Wo, wo is me, that men should think there is anything in me! He is my witness, before whom I am as crystal, that the secret house-devils, that bear me too often company, that this sink of corruption which I find within, make me go with low sails; and if others saw what I see, they would look by[2] me, but not to me.

2ndly, I know that this shower of his free grace behooved to be on me, otherwise I should have withered. I know, also, that I have need of a buffeting tempter, that grace may be put to exercise, and I kept low.

Worthy, and dear brother in our Lord Jesus, I write that from my heart, which ye now read. 1st, I vouch that Christ, and sweating and sighing under his cross, is sweeter to me by far, than all the kingdoms in the world could possibly be. 2ndly, if you, and my dearest acquaintance in Christ, reap any fruit by my suffering, let me be weighed in God's even balance, if my joy be not fulfilled. What am I to carry the marks of such a great King? But, howbeit I am a sink and sinful mass, a wretched captive of sin, my Lord Jesus can hew heaven out of worse timber than I am—if worse can be. 3rdly, I now rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorious, that I never purposed to bring Christ or the least hoof, or hair-breadth of truth, under trysting:[3] I desire to have and keep Christ all alone; and that he should never rub clothes with that black-skinned harlot of Rome. I am now fully paid home, so that nothing aileth me, for the present, but love-sickness for a real possession of my fairest well-beloved. I would give him my bond, under my faith and hand, to frist[4] Heaven an hundred years longer, so being he would lay his holy face to my sometimes wet cheeks. Oh, who would not pity me, to know how fain I would have the King shaking the tree of life upon me, or letting me into the well of life with my old dish, that I might be drunken with the fountain, here, in the house of my pilgrimage! I can-

[1] Barter. [2] Past.

[3] Rutherford rejoiced that he never attempted to compromise the least jot or tittle of Divine truth, by subjecting it to any mere human arrangement.

[4] *To frist*, to postpone enjoyment of a thing, under the hope of ultimately obtaining.

not, nay, I would not, be quit of Christ's love. He hath left the mark behind where he gripped.[1] He goeth away and leaveth me and his burning love to wrestle together, and I can scarce win my meat[2] of his love, because of absence. My Lord giveth me but hungry half-kisses, which serve to feed pain, and increase hunger, but do not satisfy my desires; his dieting of my soul for this race maketh me lean. I have gotten the wale and choice[3] of Christ's crosses, even the tythe and the flower of the gold of all crosses, to bear witness to the truth: and herein find I liberty, joy, access, life, comfort, love, faith, submission, patience, and resolution to take delight in on-waiting; and withal in my race he hath come near me, and let me see the gold and crown. What then want I, but fruition and real enjoyment, which is reserved to my country?[4] Let no man think he shall lose at Christ's hands in suffering for him. 4thly, As for these present trials, they are most dangerous; for people are stolen off their feet with well washen[5] and white-skinned pretences of indifferency:—but it is the power of the great Antichrist working in this land. Wo, wo, wo be to apostate Scotland! There is wrath, and a cup of the red wine of the wrath of God Almighty in the Lord's hand, that they shall drink and spue, and fall and not rise again. The star called wormwood and gall, is fallen into the fountains, and rivers, and hath made them bitter. The sword of the Lord is furbished against the idol-shepherds of the land. Women shall bless the barren womb and miscarrying breast; all hearts shall be faint, and all knees shall tremble. An end is coming: the leopard and the lion shall watch over our cities: houses great and fair shall be desolate without an inhabitant. The Lord hath said, "Pray not for this people, for I have taken my peace from them:" yet the Lord's third part shall come through the fire, as refined gold for the treasure of the Lord. And the outcasts of Scotland shall be gathered together again, and the wilderness shall blossom as the flower, and bud, and grow as the rose of Sharon—and great shall be the glory of the Lord upon Scotland. 5thly, I am here assaulted with the learned and pregnant wits of this kingdom; but, all honor be to my Lord, truth but laughs at bemisted[6] and blind scribes, and disputers of this world: and God's wisdom confoundeth them, and Christ triumpheth in his own strong truth, that speaketh for itself. 6thly, I doubt not that my Lord is preparing me for heavier trials. I am most ready at the good pleasure of my Lord, in the strength of his grace, for anything he will be pleased to call me to; neither shall the last black-faced messenger, Death, be holden at the door, when it shall knock. If my Lord will take honor of the like of me, how glad and joyful will my soul be! Let Christ come out with me to a hotter battle than this, and I will fear no flesh. I know that my Master shall

[1] Caught, held fast.
[2] Earn my bare livelihood.
[3] The very best that could be chosen.
[4] Reserved for him in Heaven, (Heb. xi. 16.)
[5] Washed.
[6] Involved in mist.

win the day, and that he hath taken the ordering of my sufferings into his own hand. 7thly, As for my deliverance that miscarrieth, I am here, by my Lord's grace, to lay my hand on my mouth, to be silent, and wait on. My Lord Jesus is on his journey for my deliverance: I will not grudge that he runneth not so fast as I would have him; on-waiting till the swelling rivers fall, and till my Lord arise as a mighty man after strong wine, will be my best:—I have not yet resisted to blood. 8thly, Oh, how often am I laid in the dust, and urged by the tempter, (who can ride his own errands upon our lying apprehensions,) to sin against the unchangeable love of my Lord! when I think upon the sparrows and swallows, that build their nests in the kirk of Anwoth, and of my dumb Sabbaths, my sorrowful bleared eyes look asquint upon Christ, and present him as angry. But in this trial—all honor to our princely and royal King—faith saileth fair before the wind, with top-sail up, and carrieth the passenger through. I lay inhibitions upon my thoughts, that they receive no slanders of my only, only beloved. Let him even say out of his own mouth, "There is no hope;" yet I will die in that sweet beguile,[1] "It is not so, I shall see the salvation of God." Let me be deceived really, and never win[2] to dry land; it is my joy to believe under the water, and to die with faith in my hand gripping[3] Christ. Let my conceptions of Christ's love go to the grave with me, and to Hell with me, I may not, I dare not quit them. I hope to keep Christ's pawn: if he never come to loose it, let him see to his own promise. I know that presumption, howbeit it be made of stoutness, will not thus be wilful in heavy trials.

Now my dearest in Christ, the great Messenger of the Covenant, the only wise, and all-sufficient Jehovah, establish you to the end. I hear that the Lord hath been at your house, and hath called home your wife to her rest. I know, sir, that ye see the Lord loosing the pins of your tabernacle, and wooing your love from this plastered, and over-gilded world, and calling upon you to be making yourself ready to go to your Father's country, which shall be a sweet fruit of that visitation. Ye know, "To send the Comforter," was the King's word when he ascended on high; ye have claim to, and interest in, that promise.

Remember my love in Christ to your father. Show him that it is late, and black night with him. His long lying at the water-side, is that he may look his papers ere he take shipping, and be at a point for his last answer before his Judge and Lord.

All love, all mercy, all grace, and peace, all multiplied saving consolations, all joy and faith in Christ, all stability, and confirming strength of grace, and the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush, be with you.

Your unworthy brother, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 15, 1637.

[1] Delusion. [2] Get. [3] Holding fast.

LETTER CLXXVII.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

WORTHY, AND DEAREST IN THE LORD,—I ever loved (since I knew you,) that little vineyard of the Lord's planting in Galloway; but now much more, since I have heard that he who hath his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem, hath been pleased to set up a furnace amongst you with the first in this kingdom. He who maketh old things new, seeing Scotland an old, drossy and rusted Kirk, is beginning to make a new, clean bride of her, and to bring a young, chaste wife to himself out of the fire. This fire shall be quenched as soon as Christ has brought a clean spouse through the fire! Therefore, my dearly beloved in the Lord, fear not a worm. "Fear not worm, Jacob." Christ is in that plea, and shall win the plea. Charge an unbelieving heart, under the pain of treason against our great and royal King Jesus, to dependence by faith, and quiet on-waiting on our Lord. Get you into your chambers, and shut the doors about you. In, in with speed to your strong hold, ye prisoners of hope. Ye doves, flee unto Christ's windows till the indignation be over, and the storm be past. Glorify the Lord in your sufferings, and take his banner of love, and spread it over you. Others will follow you, if they see you strong in the Lord. Their courage will take life from your Christian carriage. Look up and see who is coming! Lift up your head, He is coming to save, in garments dyed in blood, and travelling in the greatness of his strength. I laugh, I smile, I leap for joy, to see Christ coming to save you so quickly. Oh, such wide[1] steps Christ taketh! Three or four hills are but a step to him: he skippeth over the mountains. Christ hath set a battle betwixt his poor weak saints and his enemies. He waleth[2] the weapons for both parties, and saith to the enemies, "Take you a word of steel, law, authority, parliaments, and kings upon your side, that is your armor;" and he saith to his saints, "I give you a feckless[3] tree-sword[4] in your hand, and that is suffering, receiving of strokes, spoiling of your goods; and with your tree-sword[4] ye shall get and gain the victory." Was not Christ dragged through the ditches of deep distresses and great straits? and yet Christ, who is your head, hath won through[5] with his life, howbeit not with a whole skin. Ye are Christ's members, and he is drawing his members through the thorny hedge up to Heaven after him. Christ one day will not have so much as a pained toe; but there are great pieces and portions of Christ's mystical body not yet within the gates of the great high city, the New Jerusalem: and the Dragon will strike at Christ, so long as there is one bit, or member of Christ's body

[1] Long. [2] Selecteth. [3] Feeble.
[4] Wooden sword. [5] *To win through*, to struggle through.

out of Heaven. I tell you, Christ will make new work out of old, for-casten [1] Scotland, and gather the old broken boards of his tabernacle, and pin them, and nail them together. Our bills and supplications are up in Heaven; Christ hath coffers full of them: there is mercy on the other side of this his cross; a good answer to all our bills is agreed upon.

I must tell you what lovely Jesus, fair Jesus, King Jesus, has done to my soul. Sometimes he sendeth me out a standing drink,[2] and whispereth a word through the wall; and I am well content of kindness at the second hand—his bode [3] is ever welcome to me, be what it will. But at other times he will be messenger himself, and I get the Cup of salvation out of his own hand, (he drinking to me,) and we cannot rest till we be in other's arms—and oh, how sweet is a fresh kiss from his holy mouth! His breathing that goeth before a kiss upon my poor soul, is sweet, and hath no fault, but that it is too short. I am careless, and stand not much on this, howbeit loins and back, and shoulders, and head should rive in pieces in stepping up to my Father's house. I know that my Lord can make long, and broad, and high, and deep glory to his name, out of this bit feckless [4] body—for Christ looketh not what stuff he maketh glory out of.

My dearly beloved, ye have often refreshed me, but this is put up in my Master's account; ye have him debtor for me: but if ye will do anything for me, (as I know ye will,) now in my extremity, tell all my dear friends, that a prisoner is fettered and chained in Christ's love,—Lord, never loose the fetters!—and ye and they together take my heartiest commendations to my Lord Jesus, and thank him for a poor friend.

I desire your husband to read this letter. I send him a prisoner's blessing. I will be obliged to him if he will be willing to suffer for my dear Master. Suffering is the professor's golden garment; there shall be no losses on Christ's side of it. Ye have been witnesses of much joy betwixt Christ and me at communion-feasts, the remembrance whereof, (howbeit I be feasted in secret,) holleth [5] my heart; for I am put from the board-head [6] and the King's first mess to his by-board,[7] and his broken meat is sweet unto me. I thank my Lord for borrowed crumbs, no less than when I was feasted at the communion table at Anwoth and Kirkcudbright. Pray that I may get one day of Christ in public, as I have had long since, before my eyes be closed. Oh, that my Master would take up house again, and lend me the keys of his wine-cellar again, and God send me borrowed drink till then!

Remember my love to Christ's kinsmen with you. I pray for Christ's Father's blessing to them all. Grace be with you: a prisoner's blessing be with you. I write it, and abide by it, God will be glorious in Marion Macknaught, when this stormy blast

[1] Forsaken, cast away.
[2] A slight refreshment, to be taken standing.
[3] Offer at a sale
[4] Weak, feeble.
[5] Pierceth.
[6] Head of the table.
[7] Side table.

shall be over. O woman beloved of God, believe, rejoice, be strong in the Lord! Grace is thy portion.

Your brother, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 15, 1637.

LETTER CLXXVIII.

TO THE LADY CULROSS.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I dare not say that I wonder that ye have never written to me in my bonds, because I am not ignorant of the cause; yet I could not but write to you. I know not whether joy or heaviness in my soul carrieth it away: sorrow, without any mixture of sweetness, hath not often love-thoughts of Christ; but I see that the Devil can insinuate himself, and ride his errands upon the thoughts of a poor distressed prisoner.

I am wo[1] that I am making Christ my unfriend,[2] by seeking pleas[3] against him, because I am the first in the kingdom put to utter silence; and because I cannot preach my Lord's righteousness in the great congregation. I am, notwithstanding, the less solicitous how it go, if there be not wrath in my cup. But I know that I but claw my wounds when my Physician hath forbidden me: I would believe in the dark upon luck's head, and take my hazard of Christ's good-will, and rest on this, that in my fever my Physician is at my bed-side, and that he sympathizeth with me when I sigh. My borrowed house, and another man's bed and fire-side, and other losses, have no room in my sorrow; a greater heat to cast out a less fire, is a good remedy for some burning. I believe, that when Christ draweth blood, he hath skill to cut the right vein; and that he hath taken the whole ordering and disposing of my sufferings. Let him tutor me, and tutor my crosses, as he thinketh good. There is no danger nor hazard in following such a guide, howbeit he should lead me through Hell, if I could put faith foremost, and fill the field with a quiet on-waiting, and believing to see the salvation of God. I know that Christ is not obliged to let me see both the sides of my cross, and turn it over and over that I may see all. My faith is richer to live upon credit, and Christ's borrowed money, than to have much on hand. Alas! I have forgotten that faith in times past hath stopped a leak in my crazed bark, and hath filled my sails with a fair wind. I see it a work of God that experiences are all lost, when summons of improbation, to prove our charters of Christ to be counterfeits, are raised against poor souls in their heavy trials: but let

1 Grieved.

2 Not a friend. This word does not denote such a degree of hatred as is implied in the word "enemy."

3 Quarrels.

me be a sinner, and worse than the chief of sinners, yea, a guilty devil, I am sure that my well-beloved is God; and when I say that Christ is God, and that my Christ is God, I have said all things, I can say no more.

I would that I could build as much on this, my Christ is God, as it would bear; I might lay all the world upon it. I am sure, that Christ untried, and untaken-up in the power of his love, kindness, mercies, goodness, wisdom, long-suffering and greatness, is the rock that dim-sighted travellers dash their foot against, and so stumble fearfully. But my wounds are sorest, and pain me most when I sin against his love and mercy; and if he would set me and my conscience by the ears together, and resolve not to red the plea,[1] but let us deal it betwixt us, my spitting upon the fair face of Christ's love and mercies by my jealousies,[2] unbelief and doubting would be enough to sink me. Oh, oh, I am convinced, O Lord, I stand dumb before thee for this, let me be mine own judge in this, and I take a dreadful doom upon me for it; for I still misbelieve,[3] though I have seen that my Lord hath made my cross as if it were all crystal, so as I can see through it Christ's fair face and Heaven, and that God hath honored a lump of sinful flesh and blood, the like of me, to be Christ's honorable lord-prisoner. I ought to esteem the walls of the thieves' hole, (if I were shut up in it,) or any stinking dungeon, all hung with tapestry, and most beautiful, for my Lord Jesus; and yet I am not so shut up but that the sun shineth upon my prison, and the fair wide heaven is the covering of it. But my Lord, in his sweet visits, hath done more; for he maketh me to find that he will be a confined prisoner with me. He lyeth down and riseth up with me: when I sigh he sigheth; when I weep, he suffereth with me; and I confess that here is the blessed issue of my sufferings already begun, that my heart is filled with hunger and desire to have him glorified in my sufferings.

Blessed be ye of the Lord, madam, if you would help a poor dyvour,[4] and cause others of your acquaintance in Christ to help me to pay my debt of love, even real praises to Christ my Lord. Madam, let me charge you in the Lord, as ye shall answer to him, to help me in this duty, (which he hath tied about my neck, with a chain of such singular expressions of his loving kindness,) to set on high Christ, to hold in my honesty at his hands; for I have nothing to give to him. Oh, that he would arrest and comprise[5] my love and my heart for all! I am a dyvour,[4] who have no more free goods in the world for Christ, save that; it is both the whole heritage I have, and all my movables besides. Lord, give the thirsty man a drink. Oh, to be over the ears in the well! Oh, to be swattering,[6] and swimming over head and ears in Christ's love! I would not have Christ's love entering into me, but I would enter into it, and be swallowed up of that love. But

1 Settle which is in the fault.
2 Suspicions.
3 *To misbelieve*, not to believe aright or fully.
4 Bankrupt.
5 Legally attach for debt.
6 *To swatter*, to flutter and dabble over head in water, as ducks do.

I see not myself here; for I fear I make more of his love than of himself; whereas himself is far beyond and much better than his love. Oh, if[1] I had my sinful arms filled with that lovely One, Christ! Blessed by my rich Lord Jesus, who sendeth not away beggars from his house with a toom[2] dish. He filleth the vessels of such as will come and seek. We might beg ourselves rich, (if we were wise,) if we could hold out our withered hands to Christ, and learn to suit[3] and seek, ask and knock. I owe my salvation for Christ's glory, I owe it to Christ; and desire that my hell, yea, a new hell, seven times hotter by far than the old Hell, might buy praises before men and angels to my Lord Jesus; providing always that I were free of Christ's hatred and displeasure. What am I, to be forfeited and sold in soul and body, to have my great and royal King set on high and extolled above all? Oh, if[1] I knew how high to have him set, and all the world far, far beneath the soles of his feet! Nay, I deserve not to be the matter of his praises, far less to be an agent in praising of him. But he can win[4] his own glory out of me, and out of worse than I, (if any such be,) if it please his holy majesty so to do:—he knoweth that I am not now flattering him.

Madam, let me have your prayers, as ye have the prayers and blessing of him that is separated from his brethren. Grace, grace be with you.

Your own, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 15, 1637.

LETTER CLXXIX.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND LOVING BROTHER, MR. JOHN NEVAY.

Reverend, and dear Brother,—Grace mercy and peace be to you.—I received yours of April 11th, as I did another of March 25th, and a letter for Mr. Andrew Cant.

I am not a little grieved that our Mother-church is running so quickly to the brothel-house, and that we are hiring lovers, and giving gifts to the great Mother of fornications. Alas, that our Husband is like to quit us so shortly! It were my part, (if I were able,) when our Husband is departing, to stir up myself to take hold of him, and keep him in this land; for I know him to be a sweet second, and a lovely companion to a poor prisoner.

I find that my extremity hath sharpened the edge of his love and kindness, so that he seemeth to devise new ways of expressing the sweetness of his love to my soul. Suffering for Christ is the very element wherein Christ's love liveth, and exerciseth itself, in casting out flames of fire, and sparks of heat, to warm such a fro-

[1] Oh, that.
[2] Empty.
[3] To urge a request.
[4] Earn.

zen heart as I have; and if Christ weeping in sackcloth be so sweet, I cannot find any imaginable thoughts to think what he will be, when we clay-bodies, (having put off mortality,) shall come up to the marriage-hall and great palace, and behold the King clothed in his robes royal, sitting on his throne. I would desire no more for my heaven beneath the moon, while I am sighing in this house of clay, than daily renewed feasts of love with Christ, and liberty now and then to feed my hunger with a kiss of that fairest face, that is like the sun in his strength at noon-day. I would willingly subscribe an ample resignation to Christ of the Fourteen Prelacies of this land, and of all the most delightful pleasures on earth, and forfeit my part of this clay-god, this earth, which Adam's foolish children worship, to have no other exercise than to lye on a love-bed with Christ, and fill this hungered and famished soul with kissing, embracing, and real enjoying of the Son of God: and I think that then, I might write to my friends, that I had found the Golden World, and look out and laugh at the poor bodies, who are slaying one another for feathers. For verily, brother, since I came to this prison, I have conceived a new and extraordinary opinion of Christ, which I had not before; for I perceive, we frist[1] all our joys to Christ, till he and we be in our own house above, as married parties,—thinking that there is nothing of it here to be sought or found, but only hope and fair promises; and that Christ will give us nothing here but tears, sadness, and crosses;—and that we shall never feel the smell of the flowers of that high garden of paradise above, till we come there. Nay, but I find that it is possible to find young glory, and a young green paradise of joy, even here. I know that Christ's kisses will cast a more strong and refreshful[2] smell of incomparable glory and joy in Heaven, than they do here; because a drink of the Well of life up at the well's head, is more sweet and fresh by far, than that which we get in our borrowed, old, running-out vessels, and our wooden dishes here; yet I am now persuaded, it is our folly to frist[1] all till the term-day, seeing abundance of earnest will not diminish anything of our principal sum. We dream of hunger in Christ's house, while we are here, although he alloweth feasts to all the bairns, within God's household: it were good, then, to store ourselves with moe borrowed kisses of Christ, and with moe borrowed visits, till we enter heirs to our new inheritance, and our Tutor put us in possession of our own, when we are past minority. Oh, that all the young heirs would seek more, and a greater, and a nearer communion with my Lord Tutor, the prime Heir of all, Christ! I wish that, for my part, I could send you, and that gentleman who wrote his commendations to me, into the King's innermost cellar, and house-of-wine, to be filled with love;—a drink of this love is worth the having indeed. We carry ourselves but too nicely with Christ our Lord; and our Lord loveth not niceness, and dryness, and unconess[3] in friends. Since need-force that we

[1] Postpone. [2] Refreshing. [3] Reserve.

must be in Christ's common,[1] then let us be in his common;[1] for it will be no otherwise.

Now, for my present case in my imprisonment,—deliverance, (for any appearance that I see,) looketh cold-like.[2] My hope, if it looked to, or leaned upon men, would wither soon at the root, like a May-flower; yet I resolve to solace myself with on-waiting on my Lord, and to let my faith swim where it loseth ground. I am under a necessity either of fainting, (which I hope my Master, of whom I boast all the day, will avert,) or then[3] to lay my faith upon Omnipotency, and to wink and stick by my grip.[4] And I hope that my ship shall ride it out, seeing Christ is willing to blow his sweet wind in my sails, and mendeth and closeth the leaks in my ship, and ruleth all. It will be strange if a believing passenger be casten[5] overboard.

As for your master, my Lord and my Lady, I shall be loath to forget them. I think my prayers, (such as they are,) debt due to him; and I shall be far more engaged to his Lordship, if he be fast for Christ, (as I hope he will,) now when so many of his coat and quality slip from Christ's back, and leave him to fend for[6] himself.

I entreat you to remember my love to that worthy gentleman, A. C., who saluted me in your letter: I have heard that he is one of my Master's friends, for the which cause I am tied to him. I wish that he may more and more fall in love with Christ.

Now for your question:—As far as I rawly conceive, I think that God is praised two ways; 1st, By a concional[7] profession of his highness before men, such as is the very hearing of the word, and receiving of either of the sacraments; in which acts, by profession, we give out to men, that he is our God, with whom we are in covenant, and our Lawgiver. Thus eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper, is an annunciation and profession before men, that Christ is our slain Redeemer. Here, because God speaketh to us, not we to him, it is not a formal thanksgiving, but an annunciation, or predication of Christ's death, concional,[7] not adorative, neither hath it God for the immediate object, and, therefore, no kneeling can be here.

2ndly, There is another praising of God, formal, when we are either formally blessing God, or speaking his praises. And this I take to be twofold:—1. When we directly and formally direct praises and thanksgiving to God. This may well be done kneeling, in token of our recognizance of his highness; yet not so, but that it may be done standing or sitting, especially seeing joyful elevation, (which should be in praising,) is not formally signified by kneeling. 2. When we speak good of God, and declare his glorious nature and attributes, extolling him before men, to excite men to conceive highly of him. The former I hold to be worship every way immediate, else I know not any immediate worship at

1 Under obligation to Christ. 2 Most hopeless. 3 Otherwise.
4 To shut my eyes, hold on with might and main, and abide by the consequences.
5 Cast. 6 Shift for. 7 Declarative in, or by act of, a public assembly.

all: the latter hath God for the subject, not properly the object, seeing the predication is directed to men immediately, rather than to God, for here we speak of God by way of praising, rather than to God. And for my own part, as I am, for the present, minded, I see not how this can be done kneeling, seeing it is *prædicatio Dei et Christi, non laudatio aut benedictio Dei.* But observe that it is formal praising of God, and not merely concional,[1] as I distinguished in the first member; for, in the first member, any speaking of God, or of his works of creation, providence, and redemption, is indirect and concional[1] praising of him, and formally preaching, or an act of teaching, not an act of predication of his praises; for there is a difference betwixt the simple relation of the virtues of a thing, which is formally teaching, and the extolling of the worth of a thing, by way of commendation, to cause others to praise with us.

Thus recommending you to God's sweet grace, I rest,

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 15, 1637.

LETTER CLXXX.

TO THE MUCH HONORED JOHN GORDON, OF CARDONESS, ELDER.

MUCH HONORED, AND DEAREST IN MY LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—My soul longeth exceedingly to hear how matters go betwixt you and Christ; and whether or not there be any work of Christ in that parish, that will bide the trial of fire and water. Let me be weighed of my Lord in a just balance, if your souls lye not weighty upon me. Ye go to bed and ye rise with me: thoughts of your soul, (my Dearest in our Lord,) depart not from me in my sleep; ye have a great part of my tears, sighs, supplications, and prayers. Oh, if[2] I could buy your soul's salvation with any suffering whatsoever, and that ye and I might meet with joy up in the rainbow, when we shall stand before our Judge! Oh, my Lord forbid, that I have any hard thing to depone[3] against you in that day! Oh, that He who quickeneth the dead, would give life to my sowing among you! What joy is there, (next to Christ,) that standeth on this side of death, which would comfort me more, than that the souls of that poor people were in safety, and beyond all hazard of being lost!

Sir, show the people this; for when I write to you, I think I write to you all, old and young. Fulfil my joy, and seek the Lord. Sure I am, that once I discovered my lovely, royal, princely Lord Jesus to you all. Wo, wo, wo shall be your part of it for evermore, if the Gospel be not the savor of life unto life to you. As many sermons as I preached, as many sentences as I uttered,

[1] Declarative in, or by act of, a public assembly.
[2] Oh, that.
[3] To depose, to witness.

as many points of dittay[1] shall they be, when the Lord shall plead with the world, for the evil of their doings. Believe me, I find Heaven a city hard to be won. "The righteous shall scarcely be saved." Oh, what violence of thronging will Heaven take! Alas! I see many deceiving themselves; for we will all to Heaven now. Every foul dog with his foul feet will in at the nearest, to the new and clean Jerusalem. All say they have faith; and the greatest part in the world know not, and will not consider, that a slip in the matter of their salvation, is the most pitiable slip that can be; and that no loss is comparable to this loss. Oh then, see that there be not a loose pin in the work of your salvation! for ye will not believe how quickly the Judge will come; and for yourself, I know that death is waiting, and hovering, and lingering at God's command, that ye may be prepared. Then ye had need to stir your time, and to take eternity and death, to your riper advisement: a wrong step, or a wrong stot,[2] in going out of this life, is, in one property, like the sin against the Holy Ghost, and can never be forgiven, because ye cannot come back again through the last water to mourn for it. I know your accounts are many, and will take telling, and laying, and reckoning betwixt you and your Lord. Fit your accounts, and order them. Lose not the last play, whatever ye do, for in that play with death your precious soul is the prize: for the Lord's sake spill[3] not the play, and lose not such a treasure. Ye know, that out of love which I had to your soul, and out of desire which I had to make an honest account of you, I testified my displeasure and disliking of your ways very often, both in private and public: I am not now a witness of your doings, but your Judge is always your witness. I beseech you by the mercies of God, by the salvation of your soul, by your comforts when your eye-strings shall break, and the face wax pale, and the soul shall tremble to be out of the lodging of clay, and by your compearance[4] before your awful Judge, after the sight of this letter, to take a new course with your ways, and now, in the end of your day, make sure of Heaven. Examine yourself if ye be in good earnest in Christ; for some, (Heb. vi. 4, 5,) are partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste of the good word of God, and of the powers of the life to come, and yet have no part in Christ at all. Many think they believe, but never tremble; the devils are farther on than these, (James ii. 19.) Make sure to yourself that ye are above ordinary professors. The sixth part of your span-length and hand-breadth of days is scarcely before you: —haste, haste, for the tide will not bide.[5] Put Christ upon all your accounts and your secrets. Better it is that you give him your accounts in this life, out of your own hand, than that, after this life, he take them from you. I never knew so well what sin was, as since I came to Aberdeen, howbeit I was preaching of it to you. To feel the smoke of Hell's fire in the throat for half an

1 Indictment.
2 Movement. *Stot* signifies the rebounding of a ball.
3 Spoil, ruin.
4 Appearance in obedience to legal citation.
5 Stay, wait.

hour; to stand before a river of fire and brimstone broader than the earth; and to think to be bound hand and foot, and casten into the midst of it quick, and then to have God locking the prison-door, never to be opened for all eternity! Oh how it will shake a conscience that hath any life in it! I find the fruits of my pains to have Christ and that people once fairly met, now meet my soul in my sad hours: and I rejoice that I gave fair warning of all the corruptions now entering into Christ's house; and now many a sweet, sweet, soft kiss, many perfumed, well-smelled kisses, and embracements have I received of my royal Master. He and I have had much love together. I have for the present a sick dwining [1] life, with much pain, and much love sickness for Christ. Oh, what would I give to have a bed made to my wearied soul, in his bosom! I would frist [2] Heaven for many years, to have my fill of Jesus in this life, and to have occasion to offer Christ to my people, and to woo many people to Christ. I cannot tell you what sweet pain, and delightsome torments are in Christ's love; I often challenge [3] time that holdeth us asunder. I profess to you, I have no rest, I have no ease, whill I be over head and ears in love's ocean. If Christ's love, (that fountain of delight,) were laid as open to me as I would wish, oh, how I would drink, and drink abundantly! oh, how drunken would this my soul be! I half call [4] his absence cruel; and the mask and veil on Christ's face a cruel covering, that hideth such a fair face from a sick soul. I dare not challenge [3] himself, but his absence is a mountain of iron upon my heavy heart. Oh, when shall we meet? Oh, how long is it to the dawning of the marriage-day! O sweet Lord Jesus, take wide [5] steps; O my Lord, come over mountains at one stride! O my Beloved, flee like a roe, or a young hart, on the mountains of separation.[6] Oh, if [7] he would fold the Heavens together like an old cloak, and shovel time and days out of the way, and make ready in haste the Lamb's wife for her Husband! Since he looked upon me, my heart is not mine own, he hath run away to Heaven with it. I know it was not for nothing that I spake so meikle [8] good of Christ to you in public. Oh, if [7] the Heaven, and the Heaven of heavens were paper, and the sea ink, and the multitude of mountains pens of brass, and I able to write that paper, within and without, full of the praises of my fairest, my dearest, my loveliest, my sweetest, my matchless, and my most marrowless [9] and marvellous Well-beloved! Wo is me, I cannot set him out to men and angels! Oh, there are few tongues to sing love-songs of his incomparable excellency! What can I, poor prisoner, do to exalt him? or what course can I take to extol my lofty and lovely Lord Jesus? I am put to my wit's end, how to get his name made great. Blessed they, who would help me in this! How sweet is Christ's back! Oh, what then

[1] Pining.
[2] *To frist*, to postpone, with the confidence, however, of ultimately obtaining possession.
[3] *To challenge*, to call in question.
[4] Almost call.
[5] Long.
[6] Song of Sol. ii. 17.
[7] Oh, that.
[8] Much.
[9] Peerless, unequalled.

is in his face? Those that see his face, how dow[1] they get their eye plucked off him again? Look up to him and love him. Oh, love and live! It were life to me if you would read this letter to that people, and if they did profit by it. Oh, if[2] I could cause them to die of love for Jesus! Charge them by the salvation of their souls, to hang about Christ's neck, and take their fill of his love, and follow him, as I taught them. Part by no means with Christ. Hold fast what ye have received. Keep the truth once delivered. If ye or that people quit it in a hair, or in a hoof, ye break your conscience in twain; and who then can mend it, and cast[3] a knot on it? My dearest in the Lord, stand fast in Christ; keep the faith; contend for Christ; wrestle for him, and take men's feud for God's favor: there is no comparison betwixt these. Oh that the Lord would fulfil my joy, and keep the young bride that is at Anwoth to Christ.

And now, whoever they be, that have returned to the old vomit since my departure, I bind upon their back, in my Master's name and authority, the long-lasting, weighty vengeance, and curse of God: in my Lord's name I give them a black, unmixed, pure wrath, which my Master will ratify and make good, when we stand together before him, except they timously[4] repent, and turn to the Lord. And I write to thee, poor mourning and broken-hearted believer, be thou who thou wilt, of the free salvation. Christ's sweet balm for thy wounds, O poor humble Believer; Christ's kisses for thy watery cheeks: Christ's blood of atonement for thy guilty soul; Christ's Heaven for thy poor soul, though once banished out of Paradise; and my Master will make good my word ere long. Oh that people were wise! Oh that people were wise! Oh that people would speer out[5] Christ, and never rest whill they find him. Oh, how my soul will mourn in secret, if my nine years' pained head, and sore[6] breast, and pained back, and grieved heart, and private and public prayers to God, will all be for nothing among that people! Did my Lord Jesus send me but to summon you before your Judge, and to leave you summons at your houses? Was I sent as a witness only to gather your dittays?[7] Oh, may God forbid! Often did I tell you of a fan of God's word to come among you, for the contempt of it. I told you often of wrath, wrath from the Lord, to come upon Scotland; and yet I bide by my Master's word; it is quickly coming. Desolation for Scotland, because of the quarrel of a broken covenant.

Now, worthy sir, now my dear people, my joy, and my crown in the Lord, let him be your fear. Seek the Lord, and his face—save your souls. Doves! flee to Christ's windows. Pray for me, and praise for me. The blessing of my God, the prayers and blessing of a poor prisoner, and your lawful pastor, be upon you.

Your lawful, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 16, 1637.

1 Are able to.
2 Oh, that.
3 Tie.
4 In time, seasonably.
5 *To speer out*, to discover by diligent inquiry.
6 Aching.
7 Indictments.

LETTER CLXXXI.

TO EARLSTON, YOUNGER.

MUCH HONORED, AND WELL-BELOVED IN THE LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Your letters give a dash to my laziness in writing. I must first tell you, that there is not such a glassy, icy, and slippery piece of way betwixt you and Heaven, as youth; and I have experience to say with me here, and to seal what I assert. The old ashes of the sins of my youth are now fire of sorrow to me. I have seen the Devil, as it were, dead and buried, and yet rise again, and be a worse devil than ever he was; —therefore, my brother, beware of a green young devil, that hath never been buried. The Devil in his flowers, (I mean the hot, fiery lusts and passions of youth,) is much to be feared. Better yoke with[1] an old gray-haired, withered, dry devil: for in youth he findeth dry sticks, and dry coals, and a hot hearth-stone; and how soon can he with his flint cast fire,[2] and with his bellows blow it up, and fire the house? Sanctified thoughts, thoughts made conscience of, and called in, and kept in awe, are green fuel that burn not, and are a water for Satan's coal. Yet I must tell you, that the whole saints now triumphant in Heaven, and standing before the throne, are nothing but Christ's forlorn and beggarly dyvours.[3] What are they but a pack of redeemed sinners? but their redemption is not only past the seals, but completed; and yours is on the wheels, and in doing.

All Christ's good bairns go to Heaven with a broken brow, and with a crooked leg. Christ hath an advantage of you, and I pray you to let him have it, he will find employment for his calling in you. If it were not with you as ye write, grace should find no sale nor market in you; but ye must be content to give Christ somewhat to do. I am glad that he is employed that way. Let your bleeding soul and your sores be put in the hand of this expert Physician; let young and strong corruptions and his free grace be yoked together, and let Christ and your sins deal it betwixt them. I shall be loath to put you off your fears, and your sense of deadness—I wish it were more;—there be some wounds of that nature, that their bleeding should not be soon stopped. You must take a house beside the Physician. It will be a miracle if ye be the first sick man whom he put away uncured, and worse than he found you. Nay, nay, Christ is honest, and in that is flyting-free[4] with sinners, (John vi. 37,) "And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Take ye that. It cannot be presumption to take that as your own, when you find that your wounds stound[5] you. Presumption is ever whole at the heart, and hath but the truant-

[1] *To yoke with*, to engage in conflict with.
[2] *To cast fire*, to strike fire.
[3] Bankrupts.
[4] Blameless, and, therefore, entitled to chide or rebuke one that is not so.
[5] *To stound*, suddenly and intermittently to pain.

sickness,[1] and groaneth only for the fashion:[2] faith hath sense of sickness, and looketh like a friend to the promises; and looking to Christ therein is glad to see a known face. Christ is as full a feast as ye can have to hunger. Nay, Christ, I say, is not a full man's leavings; his mercy sendeth always a letter of defiance to all your sins, if there were ten thousand moe[3] of them.

I grant you that it is a hard matter for a poor hungry man to win his meat[4] upon hidden Christ: for then, the key of his pantry-door, and of the house-of-wine, is a-seeking, and cannot be had; but hunger must break through iron locks. I bemoan them not who can make a din, and all the fields ado,[5] for a lost Saviour. Ye must let him hear it, (to say so,) upon both sides of his head, when he hideth himself; it is not time then to be bird-mouthed[6] and patient. Christ is rare indeed, and a delicacy to a sinner. He is a miracle, and a world's wonder to a seeking and a weeping sinner; but yet such a miracle as shall be seen by them, who will come and see. The seeker and sigher, is at last a singer and enjoyer—nay, I have seen a dumb man get alms from Christ. He that can tell his tale, and send such a letter to Heaven as he hath sent to Aberdeen, it is very like he will come speed[7] with Christ: it bodeth God's mercy to complain heartily for sin. Let wrestling be with Christ till he say, "How is it, sir, that I cannot be quit of your bills, and your misleared[8] cries?" and then hope for Christ's blessing, and his blessing is better than ten other blessings. Think not shame[9] because of your guiltiness: necessity must not blush to beg: it standeth you hard to be without Christ; and, therefore, that which idle on-waiting cannot do, misnurtured[10] crying and knocking will do.

And for doubtings, because you are not as you were long since with your Master, consider three things: 1st, What if Christ had such tottering thoughts of the bargain of the New Covenant betwixt you and him, as you have? 2ndly, Your heart is not the compass which Christ saileth by. He will give you leave to sing as you please, but he will not dance to your daft[11] spring. It is not referred to you and your thoughts, what Christ will do with the charters betwixt you and him: your own misbelief hath torn them; but he hath the principal in Heaven with himself. Your thoughts are no parts of the New Covenant: dreams change not Christ. 3rdly, Doubtings are your sins, but they are Christ's drugs, and ingredients that the Physician maketh use of for the curing of your pride. Is it not suitable for a beggar to say at meat, "God reward the winners?"[12] for then he saith that he knoweth who beareth the charges of the house. It is also meet

1 Feigned sickness. 2 For the sake of appearances.
3 More. 4 To earn his livelihood.
5 That is, can fill all the fields with their outcries, in allusion to the bellowings of cattle when they have lost their mates. 6 Mealy-mouthed.
7 Succeed, prosper.
8 Ill-bred, unmannerly, implying also the idea of greediness.
9 Be not ashamed. 10 Unsubdued. 11 Foolish.
12 That is, "God reward the givers." The phrase is formed upon the principle laid down in Acts xx. 35, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

that ye should know, by experience, that faith is not nature's ill-gotten bastard, but your Lord's free gift, that lay in the womb of God's free grace—praised be the Winner.[1] I may add a 4thly: In the passing of your bill and your charters, when they went through the Mediator's great seal, and were concluded, faith's advice was not sought: faith hath not a vote beside Christ's merits: blood, blood, dear blood, that came from your Cautioner's[2] holy body, maketh that sure work. The use, then, which ye have of faith now, (having already closed with Jesus Christ for justification,) is, to take out a copy of your pardon; and so ye have peace with God upon the account of Christ: for, since faith apprehendeth pardon, but never payeth a penny for it, no marvel that salvation doth not die and live, ebb or flow, with the working of faith. But because it is your Lord's honor to believe his mercy, and his fidelity, it is infinite goodness in our Lord, that misbelief[3] giveth a dash to our Lord's glory, and not to our salvation. And so, whoever want, (yea, howbeit God here bear with the want of what we are obliged to give him, even the glory of his grace by believing,) yet a poor covenanted sinner wanteth not; but if guiltiness were removed, doubtings would find no friend, nor life; and yet faith is to believe the removal of guiltiness, in Christ. A reason why ye get less now (as ye think) than before (as I take it) is, because, at our first conversion, our Lord putteth the meat in young bairns' mouths with his own hand: but when we grow to some further perfection, we must take Heaven by violence, and take by violence from Christ what we get; and he can, and doth hold, because he will have us to draw. Remember now that ye must live upon violent plucking. Laziness is a greater fault now than long since. We love always to have the pap put in our mouth.

Now for myself; alas! I am not the man I go for in this nation; men have not just weights to weigh me in. Oh, but I am a silly feckless[4] body, and overgrown with weeds; corruption is rank and fat in me. Oh, if[5] I were answerable to this holy cause, and to that honorable Prince's love for whom I now suffer! If Christ should refer the matter to me, (in his presence I speak it,) I might think shame[6] to vote my own salvation. I think Christ might say, "Thinkest thou not shame[6] to claim Heaven, who doest so little for it?" I am very often so, that I know not whether I sink or swim in the water. I find myself a bag of light froth. I would bear no weight, (but vanities, and nothings weigh in Christ's balance,) if my Lord cast not in borrowed weight and metal, even Christ's righteousness, to weigh for me. The stock I have is not mine own; I am but the merchant that traffiketh with other folks' goods: if my creditor, Christ, should take from me what he hath lent, I should not long keep the causeway,[7] but Christ hath made it mine and his. I think it man-

[1] That is, Christ, who has merited or won a right to become the dispenser of the gifts of God's free grace.
[2] Surety's. [3] Weak faith. [4] Weak, pithless. [5] Oh, that.
[6] Be ashamed. [7] Appear, without shame or fear, in public.

hood to play the coward, and jouk[1] in the lee-side of Christ; and thus I am not only saved from my enemies, but I obtain the victory. I am so empty that I think it were an alms-deed in Christ, if he would win a poor prisoner's blessing for evermore, and fill me with his love. I complain that when Christ cometh, he cometh always to fetch fire; he is ever in haste, he may not tarry; and poor I, (a beggarly dyvour,[2]) get but a standing visit and a standing kiss, and but, "How doest thou?" in the by-going.[3] I dare not say he is lordly, because he is made a king now at the right hand of God; or is grown miskenning[4] and dry to his poor friends; (for he cannot make more of his kisses than they are worth;) but I think it my happiness to love the love of Christ: and when he goeth away, the memory of his sweet presence is like a feast in a dear summer. I have comfort in this, that my soul desireth that every hour of my imprisonment were a company of heavenly tongues to praise him on my behalf; albeit, my bonds were prolonged for many hundred years. Oh, that I could be the man who could procure my Lord's glory to flow like a full sea, and blow like a mighty wind upon all the four airths[5] of Scotland, England, and Ireland! Oh, if[6] I could write a book of his praises. O fairest among the sons of men, why stayest thou so long away? O heavens, move fast! O time, run, run, and hasten the marriage-day! for love is tormented with delays. O angels, O seraphims, who stand before him, O blessed spirits who now see his face, set him on high! for when ye have worn your harps in his praises, all is too little, and is nothing, to cast the smell of the praise of that fair flower, that fragrant rose of Sharon, through many worlds!

Sir, take my hearty commendations to him, and tell him that I am sick of love.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 16, 1637.

LETTER CLXXXII.

TO HIS HONORED, AND DEAR BROTHER, ALEXANDER GORDON, OF KNOCKGRAY.

DEAREST, AND TRULY HONORED BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you. I have seen no letter from you since I came to Aberdeen: I will not interpret it to be forgetfulness. I am here in a fair prison: Christ is my sweet and honorable fellow-prisoner,

[1] *To jouk*, to incline the body forward by a sudden motion, in order to avoid a stroke, or injury. [2] Bankrupt. [3] Passing.
[4] So proud as not to condescend to acknowledge acquaintance with.
[5] Four quarters or cardinal points of the compass. [6] Oh, that.

and I his sad and joyful lord-prisoner,[1] (if I may speak so.) I think this cross becometh me well, and is suitable to me in respect of my duty to suffer for Christ; howbeit not in regard of my deserving to be thus honored. However it be, I see that Christ is strong, even lying in the dust, in prison, and in banishment. Losses and disgraces are the wheels of Christ's triumphing chariot. In the sufferings of his own saints, as he intendeth their good, so he intendeth his own glory, and that is the butt his arrows shoot at: and Christ shooteth not at the rovers,[2] he hitteth what he purposeth to hit; therefore, he doth make his own feckless[3] and weak nothings, and those who are the contempt of men, "a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth, to thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and to make the hills as chaff, and to fan them," (Isaiah xli. 15, 16.) What harder stuff, or harder grain for threshing out, than high and rocky mountains? but the saints are God's threshing instruments to beat them all into chaff. Are we not God's leem[4] vessels? and yet when they cast us over an house we are not broken into sherds. We creep in under our Lord's wings in the great shower, and the water cannot come through those wings. It is folly then for men to say, "This is not Christ's plea, he will lose the wed-fee;[5] men are like to beguile him"—that were indeed a strange play. Nay, I dare pledge my soul, and lay it in pawn on Christ's side of it, and be half-tinner,[6] half-winner with my Master! Let fools laugh the fool's laughter, and scorn Christ, and bid the weeping captives in Babylon "sing us one of the songs of Zion, play a spring to cheer up your sad-hearted God." We may sing upon luck's-head[7] beforehand even in our winter-storm, in the expectation of a summer sun, at the turn of the year. No created powers in Hell, or out of Hell, can mar the music of our Lord Jesus, nor spill[8] our song of joy. Let us then be glad, and rejoice in the salvation of our Lord: for faith had never yet cause to have wet cheeks and hinging[9] down brows, or to droop or die. What can ail faith, seeing Christ suffereth himself, (with reverence to him be it spoken,) to be commanded by it, and Christ commandeth all things? Faith may dance, because Christ singeth; and we may come into the choir, and lift our hoarse and rough voices, and chirp, and sing, and shout for joy with our Lord Jesus. We see oxen go to the shambles leaping and startling;[10] we see God's fed oxen, prepared for the day of slaughter, go dancing and singing down to the black chambers of Hell; and why should we go to Heaven weeping, as if we were like to fall down through the earth for sorrow? If God were dead, (if I may speak so, with reverence of Him who liveth forever and ever,) and Christ buried, and rotten among the worms, we might have cause to look like dead folks: but, "the Lord liveth, and blessed be the Rock of our sal-

[1] That is, treated by Christ with the greatest kindness and honor. [2] At random.
[3] Unsubstantial, feeble. [4] Earthen. [5] Bet, wager. [6] Half loser.
[7] That is, upon certainty of success. [8] Ruin, spoil.
[9] Hanging. [10] Running about in an excited, gladsome manner.

vation." (Psalm xviii. 46.) None have right to joy but we; for joy is sown for us, and an ill summer or harvest will not spill [1] the crop. The children of this world have much robbed joy that is not well-come.[2] It is no good sport they laugh at: they steal joy, as it were, from God; for he commandeth them to mourn and howl. Then let us claim our leel-come [2] and lawfully conquessed [3] joy.

My dear brother, I cannot but speak what I have felt; seeing my Lord Jesus hath broken a box of spikenard upon the head of his poor prisoner, and it is hard to hide a sweet smell; it is a pain to smother Christ's love; it will be out whether we will or not. If we did but speak according to the matter, a cross for Christ should have another name; yea, a cross, especially when he cometh with his arms full of joys, is the happiest hard tree that ever was laid upon my weak shoulder. Christ and his cross together are sweet company, and a blessed couple. My prison is my palace, my sorrow is with child of joy, my losses are rich losses, my pain easy pain, my heavy days are holy and happy days. I may tell a new tale of Christ to my friends. Oh, if [4] I could make a love song of him, and could commend Christ, and tune his praises aright! Oh, if [4] I could set all tongues in Great Britain and Ireland to work, to help me to sing a new song of my Well-beloved! Oh, if [4] I could be a bridge over a water for my Lord Jesus to walk upon, and keep his feet dry! Oh, if [4] my poor bit heaven could go betwixt my Lord and blasphemy, and dishonor! (upon condition he loved me.) Oh, that my heart could say this word, and abide by it forever! Is it not great art, and incomparable wisdom in my Lord, who can bring forth such fair apples out of this crabbed tree of the cross? Nay, my Father's never-enough admired providence can make a fair feast out of a black devil. Nothing can come wrong to my Lord in his sweet working. I would even fall sound asleep in Christ's arms, and my sinful head on his holy breast, while he kisseth me; were it not that often the wind turneth to the north, and whiles my sweet Lord Jesus is so, that he will neither give nor take, borrow nor lend with me. I complain that he is not social; I half call him proud and lordly of his company, and nice of his looks; which yet is not true. It would content me to give, albeit he should not take. I should be content to want his kisses at such times, providing he would be content to come near-hand, and take my wersh,[5] dry, and feckless [6] kisses. But at that time he will not be entreated, but let a poor soul stand still and knock, and never let-on him [7] that he heareth; and then the old leavings and broken meat, and dry sighs, are greater cheer than I can tell. All I have then is, that howbeit the law and wrath have gotten a decreet [8] against me, I can yet lippen [9] that meikle [10] good in Christ, as to

[1] Ruin, spoil.
[2] Lawfully obtained.
[3] Obtained by purchase or industry, in opposition to obtained by inheritance.
[4] Oh, that.
[5] Insipid.
[6] Feeble, pithless.
[7] Seem to take notice.
[8] Sentence of a court.
[9] *To lippen in*, to put confidence in.
[10] Much.

get a suspension,[1] and to bring my cause in reasoning again before my Well-beloved. I desire but to be heard, and at last he is content to come and agree the matter with a fool, and forgive freely, because he is God. Oh, if[2] men would glorify him, and taste of Christ's sweetness!

Brother, ye have need to be busy with Christ for this whorish Kirk. I fear lest Christ cast water upon Scotland's coal; nay, I know that Christ and his wife will be heard, he will plead for the broken Covenant. Arm you against that time.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 16, 1637.

LETTER CLXXXIII.

TO MR. J. R.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—Upon the report which I hear of you, (without any further acquaintance, except our straitest bonds in our Lord Jesus,) I thought good to write unto you, hearing of your danger to be thrust out of the Lord's house for his name's sake: therefore, my earnest and humble desire to God is, that ye may be strengthened in the grace of God, and, by the power of his might, may go on for Christ, not standing in awe of a worm that shall die. I hope that ye will not put your hand to the ark to give it a wrong totch,[3] and to overturn it, as many now do, when the archers are shooting sore at Joseph, whose bow shall abide in its strength. We owe to our royal King and princely Master a testimony. Oh, how blessed are they who can ward a blow off Christ, and his borne-down truth! Men think Christ a gone man[4] now, and that he shall never get up his head again; and they believe that his court[5] is failed, because he suffereth men to break their spears and swords upon him, and the enemies to plough Zion, and make long and deep their furrows on her back. But it would not be so, if the Lord had not a sowing for his ploughing. What can he do, but melt an old drossy Kirk, that he may bring out a new bride out of the fire again! I think that Christ is just now repairing his house, and exchanging his old vessels with new vessels, and is going through this land, and taking up an inventory and a roll of so many of Levi's sons, and good professors, that he may make them new work for the Second Temple; and whatsoever shall be found not to be for the work shall be casten[6] over the wall. When the house shall be builded, he will lay by[7] his hammers, as hav-

[1] Decree of a court suspending the execution of a sentence. [2] Oh, that.
[3] A sudden push, so as to make the object pushed at move.
[4] A man utterly overcome or conquered. [5] Favor in court.
[6] Thrown. [7] Aside.

ing no more to do with them. It is possible that he may do worse to them than lay them by: and I think the vengeance of the Lord, and the vengeance of his temple, shall be upon them.

I desire no more than to keep weight when I am past the fire: and I can now, in some weak measure, give Christ a testimonial[1] of a lovely and loving companion under suffering for him. I saw him before, but afar off! His beauty to my eye-sight groweth. A fig, a straw for ten worlds' plastered glory, and for childish shadows, the idol of clay, (this god, the World,) that fools fight for. If I had a lease of Christ of my own dating, (for whoever once cometh nigh hand[2] and taketh a hearty look of Christ's inner side, shall never wring nor wrestle themselves out of his love-grips[3] again,) I would rest contentedly in my prison: yea, in a prison without light of sun or candle, providing Christ and I had a love-bed, not of mine, but of Christ's own making; that we might lie together among the lilies till the day break, and the shadows flee away. Who knoweth how sweet a drink of Christ's love is? Oh, but to live on Christ's love is a king's life! The worst thing of Christ, even that which seemeth to be the refuse of Christ, his hard cross, his black cross, is white and fair; and the cross receiveth a beautiful lustre, and a perfumed smell from Jesus:—my dear brother, scaur[4] not at it.

While ye have time to stand upon the watch-tower, and speak, contend with this land, plead with your Harlot-mother, who hath been a treacherous half-marrow[5] to her Husband, Jesus. For I would think liberty, to preach one day, the root and top of my desires; and would seek no more of the blessings that are to be had on this side of time, till I be over the water, than to spend this, my crazy clay-house, in his service and saving of souls. But I hold my peace, because he hath done it. My shallow and ebb[6] thoughts are not the compass which Christ saileth by. I leave his ways to himself, for they are far, far above me: only I would contend with Christ for his love, and be bold to make a plea[7] with Jesus, my Lord, for a heart-fill of his love; for there is no more left to me. What standeth beyond the far end[8] of my sufferings, and what shall be the event, he knoweth; and I hope, to my joy, will make me know, when God will unfold his decrees concerning me; for there are windings, and tos and fros in his ways, which blind bodies like us cannot see.

Thus much for farther acquaintance: so recommending you, and what is before you, to the grace of God, I rest,

Your very loving brother,

In his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 16, 1637.

[1] Certificate.
[2] Near.
[3] Love-embrace.
[4] Boggle.
[5] Married partner.
[6] Exceedingly shallow.
[7] Controversy.
[8] Farther end.

LETTER CLXXXIV.

TO MR. WILLIAM DALGLEISH.

Reverend, and Well-beloved Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—I have heard somewhat of your trials in Galloway. I bless the Lord, who hath begun first in that corner, to make you a new kirk to himself. Christ hath the less ado behind, when he had refined you.

Let me entreat you, my dearly beloved, to be fast to Christ. My Witness is above, my dearest brother, that ye have added much joy to me in my bonds, when I hear that ye grow in the grace, and zeal of God for your Master. Our ministry, whether by preaching or suffering, will cast a smell through the world both of Heaven and Hell, (2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.) I persuade you, my dear brother, that there is nothing out of Heaven, next to Christ, dearer to me than my ministry; and the worth of it, in my estimation, is swelled, and paineth me exceedingly: yet I am content, for the honor of my Lord, to surrender it back again to the Lord of the vineyard; let him do with it, and me both, what he thinketh good; —I think myself too little for him.

And let me speak to you, how kind a fellow-prisoner is Christ to me! Believe me, this kind of cross, (that would not go by[1] my door, but would needs visit me,) is still the longer the more welcome to me. It is true, my silent Sabbaths have been, and are, glassy ice, whereon my faith can scarce hold its feet, and I am often blown on my back, and off my feet, with a storm of doubting; yet truly, my bonds all this time cast a mighty and rank smell of high and deep love in Christ. I cannot, indeed, see through my cross to the far end;[2] yet I believe I am in Christ's books, and in his decree (not yet unfolded to me) a man triumphing, dancing, and singing, on the other side of the Red Sea, and laughing and praising the Lamb, over beyond time, sorrow, deprivation, prelates' indignation, losses, want of friends, and death. Heaven is not a fowl flying in the air, (as men use to speak of things that are uncertain:) nay, it is well-paid for, Christ's comprisement[3] lieth on glory, for all the mourners in Zion and shall never be loosed. Let us be glad, and rejoice, that we have blood, losses and wounds, to show our Master and Captain at his appearance, and what we suffered for his cause.

Wo is me, my dear brother, that I say often, I am but dry bones, which my Lord will not bring out of the grave again; and that my faithless fears say, "Oh, I am a dry tree, that can bear no fruit; I am a useless body, who can beget no children to the Lord in his house!" Hopes of deliverance look cold and uncertain, and afar off, as if I had done with it. It is much for Christ (if I

[1] Past.
[2] Farther end.
[3] Legal attachment for debt.

may say so) to get law-borrows [1] of my sorrow, and of my quarrelous heart. Christ's love playeth me fair play. I am not wronged at all; but there is a tricking and false heart within me, that still playeth Christ foul play. I am a cumbersome neighbor to Christ; it is a wonder, that he dwelleth beside the like of me: yet I often get the advantage of the hill above my temptations; and then I despise temptation, even Hell itself, and the stink of it, and the instruments of it, and am proud of my honorable Master; and I resolve, whether contrary winds will or not, to fetch Christ's harbor; and I think a wilful and stiff contention with my Lord Jesus for his love very lawful. It is sometimes hard to me to win my meat [2] upon Christ's love, because my faith is sick, and my hope withereth, and my eyes wax dim; and unkind and comfort-eclipsing clouds go over the fair and bright Sun, Jesus; and then, when I and temptation tryste [3] the matter together, we spill [4] all through unbelief. Sweet, sweet for evermore would my life be, if I could keep faith in exercise! but I see that my fire cannot always cast light; I have even a poor man's hard world when he goeth away. But surely, since my entry hither, many a time hath my fair sun shined without a cloud; hot and burning hath Christ's love been to me. I have no vent to the expression of it; I must be content with stolen and smothered desires of Christ's glory. Oh, how far is his love behind the hand [5] with me! I am just like a man who hath nothing to pay his thousands of debt: all that can be gotten of him, is to seize upon his person. Except Christ would seize upon myself, and make the readiest payment that can be of my heart and love to himself, I have no other thing to give him. If my sufferings could do beholders good, and edify his Kirk, and proclaim the incomparable worth of Christ's love to the world, oh, then, would my soul be overjoyed, and my sad heart be cheered and calmed!

Dear brother, I cannot tell what is become of my labors among that people! If all that my Lord builded by me be casten [6] down, and the bottom be fallen out of the profession of the parish, and none stand by Christ, whose love I once preached as clearly and plainly as I could, (though far below its worth and excellence,) to that people; if so, how can I bear it! And if another make a foul harvest, where I have made a painful and honest sowing, it will not soon digest with me. But I know that his ways pass finding out. Yet my Witness, both within me and above me, knoweth, and my pained breast upon the Lord's day at night, my desire to have had Christ awful, and amiable, and sweet to that people, is now my joy. It was my desire and aim to make Christ and them one, and, if I see my hopes die in the bud, ere they bloom [7] a little, and come to no fruit, I die with grief. O my God,

[1] Legal security which a man is obliged to give to one who swears the peace against him, that he will not injure him in person or property.
[2] Earn my living.
[3] *To tryste a matter*, to bring it for adjustment before an appointed meeting.
[4] Spoil. [5] That is, in receiving its due return. [6] Thrown. [7] Blossom.

seek not an account of the violence done to me by my brethren, whose salvation I love and desire: I pray that they and I be not heard as contrary parties in the day of our compearance [1] before our Judge, in that process, led by them against my ministry, which I received from Christ. I know that a little inch, and less than the third part of this span-length and hand-breadth of time, which is posting away, will put me without the stroke, and above the reach of either brethren or foes: and it is a short-lasting injury done to me, and to my pains in that part of my Lord's vineyard. Oh, how silly [2] an advantage, is my deprivation to men, seeing that my Lord Jesus hath many ways to recover his own losses, and is irresistible to compass his own glorious ends, that his lily may grow amongst thorns, and his little Kingdom exalt itself, even under the swords and spears of contrary powers!

But, my dear brother, go on in the strength of his rich grace whom ye serve. Stand fast for Christ. Deliver the Gospel off your hand, and your ministry to your Master, with a clean and undefiled conscience. Loose not a pin of Christ's tabernacle. Do not so much as pick with your nail at one board or border of the Ark. Have no part or dealing, upon any terms, in a hoof [3] in a closed window,[3] or in a bowing of your knee, in casting down of the temple. But be a mourning and speaking witness against them who now ruin Zion. Our Master will be on us all in a clap, ere ever we wit. That day will discover all our whites and our blacks, concerning this controversy of poor oppressed Zion. Let us make our part of it good, that it may be able to abide the fire, when hay and stubble shall be burned to ashes. Nothing, nothing, I say nothing, but sound sanctification can abide the Lord's fan. I stand to my testimony, that I preached often of Scotland —Lamentation, mourning, and wo abideth thee, O Scotland! O Scotland, the fearful quarrel of a broken covenant standeth good with thy Lord!

Now, remember my Lord to all my friends, and to my parishioners, as if I named each of them particularly. I recommend you and God's people, committed by Christ to your trust, to the rich grace of our all-sufficient Lord. Remember my bonds. Praise my Lord, who beareth me up in my sufferings. As ye find occasion, according to the wisdom given you, show our acquaintance what the Lord hath done to my soul. This I seek not, verily, to hunt my own praise, but that my sweetest and dearest Master may be magnified in my sufferings. I rest,

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 16, 1637.

[1] Appearance.
[2] Contemptible, pitiful.
[3] That is, in the smallest particular. See Exod. x. 26, and Dan. vi. 10.

LETTER CLXXXV.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Dearly Beloved in our Lord Jesus Christ,—Grace, mercy, and peace, be to you.—Few know the heart of a stranger and prisoner. I am in the hands of mine enemies. I would that honest, and lawful means were essayed for bringing me home to my charge, now when Mr. A. R. and Mr. H. R. are restored. It concerneth you of Galloway most, to use supplications and addresses for this purpose, and try, if by fair means I can be brought back again. As for liberty, without I be restored to my flock, it is little to me; for my silence is my greatest prison. However it be, I wait for the Lord; I hope not to rot in my sufferings:—Lord, give me submission to wait on. My heart is sad that my days flee away, and I do no service to my Lord in his house, now when his harvest, and the souls of perishing people require it; but his ways are not like my ways, neither can I find him out. Oh, that he would shine upon my darkness, and bring forth my morning light from under the thick cloud, that men have spread over me! Oh, that the Almighty would lay my cause in a balance, and weigh me, if my soul was not taken up,[1] when others were sleeping, how to have Christ betrothed with a bride, in that part of the land! But that day that my mouth was most unjustly and cruelly closed, the bloom[2] fell off my branches, and my joy did cast the flower. Howbeit, I have been casting myself under God's feet, and wrestling to believe under a hidden and covered Lord, yet my fainting cometh before I eat, and my faith hath bowed with the sore cast, and under this almost insupportable weight. Oh, that it break not! I dare not say that the Lord hath put out my candle, and hath casten water upon my poor coal, and broken the stakes of my tabernacle: but I have tasted bitterness, and eaten gall and wormwood, since that day on which my Master laid bonds upon me to speak no more. I speak not this, because the Lord is unco[3] to me; but because beholders, that stand on dry land, see not my sea-storm. The witnesses of my sad cross, are but strangers to my sad days and nights. Oh, that Christ would let me alone, and speak love to me, and come home to me, and bring summer with him! Oh, that I might preach his beauty and glory, as once I did, before my clay-tent be removed to darkness; and that I might lift Christ off the ground, and my branches might be watered with the dew of God, and my joy in his work might grow green again, and bud, and send out a flower! But I am but a short-sighted creature, and my candle casteth not light afar off. He knoweth all that is done to me; how that when I had but one joy, and no more, and one green flower that I esteemed to be my garland, he came in one hour and dried up my

[1] Occupied. [2] Blossom. [3] Distant, reserved.

flower at the root, and took away mine only eye, and my one[1] only crown and garland. What can I say? Surely my guiltiness hath been remembered before him, and he was seeking to take down my sails, and to land the flower of my delights, and to let it lye on the coast, like an old broken ship, that is no more for the sea. But I praise him for this waled[2] stroke. I welcome this furnace; God's wisdom made choice of it for me, and it must be best, because it was his choice. Oh, that I may wait for him till the morning of this benighted Kirk break out! This poor afflicted Kirk had a fair morning; but her night came upon her before her noon-day, and she was like a traveller, forced to take house in the morning of his journey: and now her adversaries are the chief men in the land; her ways mourn; her gates languish; her children sigh for bread; and there is none to be instant with the Lord, that he would come again to his house, and dry the face of his weeping spouse, and comfort Zion's mourners, who are waiting for him. I know that he will make corn to grow upon the top of his withered Mount Zion again.

Remember my bonds, and forget me not. Oh, that my Lord would bring me again amongst you, with abundance of the Gospel of Christ! But oh, that I may set down my desires, where my Lord biddeth me! Remember my love in the Lord to your husband—God make him faithful to Christ—and my blessing to your three children. Faint not in prayer for this Kirk. Desire my people not to receive a stranger and intruder upon my ministry. Let me stand in that right and station that my Lord Jesus gave me.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXXXVI.

TO JOHN GORDON, AT RUSCO.

Dear Brother,—I earnestly desire to know the case of your soul, and to understand that ye have made sure work of Heaven and salvation.

1. Remember that salvation is one of Christ's dainties which he giveth but to a few. 2. That it is violent sweating and striving that taketh Heaven. 3. That it cost Christ's blood to purchase that house to sinners, and to set mankind down as the King's free-tenants and free-holders. 4. That many make a start towards Heaven, who fall on their back, and win[3] not up to the top of the mount. It plucketh heart and legs from them, and they sit down and give it over, because the Devil setteth a sweet-

[1] This numeral, construed in this manner, is, in the Scottish dialect, indicative of great emphasis. [2] Carefully selected. [3] Attain.

smelled flower to their nose, this fair busked[1] world, wherewith they are bewitched, and so forget or refuse to go forward. 5. Remember that many go far on, and reform many things, and can find tears, as Esau did; and suffer hunger for truth, as Judas did; and wish and desire the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; and profess fair, and fight for the Lord, as Saul did; and desire the saints of God to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; and prophesy and speak of Christ, as Caiaphas did; and walk softly and mourn for fear of Judgments, as Ahab did; and put away gross sins and idolatry, as Jehu did; and hear the word of God gladly, and reform their life in many things according to the word, as Herod did; and say, "Master," to Christ, "I will follow thee whither thou goest," as the man who offered to be Christ's servant, (Matt. viii. 19;) and may taste of the virtues of the life to come, and be partaker of the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit, and taste of the good word of God, as the apostates, who sin against the Holy Ghost, (Heb. vi.:) and yet, all these are but like gold in clink and color, and are watered[2] brass and base metal. These are written, that we should try ourselves, and not rest till we be a step nearer Christ than sun-burned and withering professors can come. 6. Consider, it is impossible that your idol-sins and ye can go to Heaven together: and, that they, who will not part with these, cannot indeed love Christ at the bottom, but only in word and show, which will not do the business. 7. Remember how swiftly God's post, time, flieth away; and that your forenoon is already spent, your afternoon will come, and then your evening, and, at last, night, when ye cannot see to work: let your heart be set upon the finishing of your journey, and the summing and laying of your accounts with your Lord. Oh, how blessed shall ye be, to have a joyful welcome of your Lord at night! How blessed are they, who in time take sure course with their souls! Bless his great name, for what ye possess in goods and children, ease and worldly contentment, that he hath given you: and seek to be like Christ in humility and lowliness of mind: and be not great and entire[3] with the world: make it not your god nor your lover, whom ye trust unto, for it will deceive you.

I recommend Christ and his love to you, in all things. Let him have the flower of your heart and your love. Set a low price upon all things but Christ; and cry down, in your thoughts, clay and dirt, that will not comfort you, when ye get summons to remove, and compear[4] before your Judge, to answer for all the deeds done in the body. The Lord give you wisdom in all things. I beseech you to sanctify God in your speaking, for holy and reverend is his name: and be temperate and sober: companionry,[5] as it is called, is a sin that holdeth men out of Heaven. I will not believe, that ye will receive the ministry of a stranger, who will preach a new and unco[6] doctrine to you. Let my salvation stand for it, if I

1 Decked.
2 Plaited with silver.
3 On the most intimate and familiar terms.
4 Appear.
5 Too much sociality, or fondness of company.
6 Strange.

delivered not the plain and whole counsel of God to you in his word.

Read this letter to your wife, and remember my love to her; and request her to take heed to do what I write to you. I pray for you, and yours. Remember me in your prayers to our Lord, that he would be pleased to send me amongst you again. Grace be with you.

Your lawful, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXXXVII.

TO MR. HUGH HENDERSON.

Reverend and dear Brother,—Who knoweth, but the wind may turn into the west again, upon Christ and his desolate bride in this land; and that Christ may get his summer by course again? for he hath had ill weather this long time, and could not find law or justice for himself and his truth these many years. I am sure the wheels of this crazed and broken Kirk run all upon no other axle-tree, nor is there any other to roll them, and cog[1] them, and drive them, than the wisdom and good pleasure of our Lord; and it were a just trick, and glorious, of never-sleeping Providence, to bring our brethren's darts, which they have shot at us, back upon their own heads. Suppose they have two strings to their bow, and can take one as another faileth them, yet there are more than three strings upon our Lord's bow; and, besides, he cannot miss the white[2] that he shooteth at. I know that he shuffleth up and down in his hand the great body of Heaven and earth; and that Kirk and commonwealth are in his hand, like a stock of cards,[3] and that he dealeth the play to the mourners of Zion, and to those that say, "Lie down, that we may go over you," at his own sovereign pleasure: and I am sure, that Zion's adversaries, in this play, shall not take up their own stakes again. Oh, how sweet a thing is it to trust in him! When Christ hath sleeped out his sleep, (if I may speak so of Him, who is the Watchman of Israel, that neither slumbereth nor sleepeth,) and his own are tried, he will arise as a strong man after wine, and make bare his holy arm, and put on vengeance as a cloak, and deal vengeance thick and double amongst the haters of Zion. It may be that we may see him sow, and send down maledictions and vengeances, as thick as drops of rain or hail, upon his enemies; for our Lord oweth them a black day, and he useth duly to pay his debts:—neither his friends and followers, nor his foes and adversaries, shall have it to say, "that he is not faithful and exact in keeping his word."

[1] *To cog*, to place a stone or piece of wood wedgewise between a wheel and the ground, so as to prevent the wheel from moving.

[2] Mark in a target, at which shooters aim.

[3] Pack of cards.

I know of no bar in God's way, but Scotland's guiltiness; and he can come over that impediment, and break that bar also, and then say to guilty Scotland, as he said, (Ezek. xxxvi.,) "Not for your sakes," etc. On-waiting had ever yet a blessed issue; and to keep the word of God's patience, keepeth still the saints dry in the water, cold in the fire, and breathing and blood-hot in the grave. What are prisons of iron walls, and gates of brass to Christ? Not so good as fail-dykes,[1] fortifications of straw, or old tottering walls. If he give the word, then chains will fall off the arms and legs of his prisoners. God be thanked, that our Lord Jesus hath the tutoring of King and court and nobles; and that he can dry the gutters[2] and the mires in Zion, and lay causeways to the temple with the carcases of bastard Lord-prelates, and idol-shepherds. The corn on the house-tops got never the husbandman's prayers, and so is seen on it, for it filleth not the hand of mowers. Christ, and truth, and innocency worketh even under the earth: and verily there is hope for the righteous. We see not what conclusions pass in Heaven anent all the affairs of God's house. We need not give hire to God to take vengeance of his enemies, for justice worketh without hire. Oh, that the seed of hope would grow again, and come to maturity! and that we could importune Christ, and double our knocks at his gate, and cast our cries and shouts over the wall, that he might come out, and make our Jerusalem the praise of the whole earth, and give us salvation for walls and bulwarks! If Christ bud, and grow green, and bloom[3] and bear seed again in Scotland, and his Father send him two summers in one year, and bless his crop, oh, what cause have we to rejoice in the free salvation of our Lord, and to set up our banners in the name of our God! Oh, that he would hasten the confusion of the leprous strumpet, the Mother and Mistress of abominations in the earth, and take graven images out of the way, and come in with the Jews in troops, and agree with his old outcast and forsaken wife, and take them again to his bed of love!

Grace be with you.

Yours, in our Master and Lord. S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXXXVIII.

TO THE LADY LARGIRIE.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I exhort you in the Lord, to go on in your journey to Heaven; and to be content with such fare by the way, as Christ and his followers have had before you; for they had always the wind on their faces; and our Lord hath not changed the way to us for our ease, but will have us following our sweet Guide. Alas, how doth sin clog us in our journey, and retard us! What fools are we, to have a by-

[1] Walls of turf. [2] Psalm cxxix. 8. [3] Blossom.

good,[1] or any other love, or match to our souls, beside Christ! It were best for us, like ill bairns, who are best heard at home, to seek our own home, and to sell our hopes of this little clay-inn and idol of the earth, where we are neither well summered, nor well wintered. Oh, that our souls would so fall at odds with the love of this world, as to think of it as a traveller doth of a drink of water, which is not any part of his treasure, but goeth away with the using;—for ten-miles journey maketh that drink to him as nothing. Oh, that we had as soon done with this world, and could as quickly dispatch the love of it! but as a child cannot hold two apples in his little hand, but the one putteth the other out of its room; so neither can we be masters and lords of two loves. Blessed were we, if we could make ourselves masters of that invaluable treasure, the love of Christ; or rather suffer ourselves to be mastered and subdued to Christ's love, so as Christ were our all things, and all other things our nothings, and the refuse of our delights. Oh let us be ready for shipping against the time our Lord's wind and tide call for us! Death is the last thief, that will come without the least din or noise of feet, and take our souls away, and we shall take our leave of time and face eternity; and our Lord will lay together the two sides of this earthly tabernacle, and fold us, and lay us by,[2] as a man layeth by[2] clothes at night, and put the one half of us in a house of clay, the dark grave, and the other half of us in Heaven or Hell. Seek to be found of your Lord in peace, and gather in your flitting,[3] and put your soul in order, for Christ will not give a nail-breadth of time to our little sand-glass.

Pray for Zion, and for me his prisoner, that he would be pleased to bring me amongst you again, full of Christ, and fraughted and loaded with the blessing of his Gospel.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his only Lord and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CLXXXIX.

TO EARLSTON, YOUNGER.

Worthy and dearly beloved in our Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I long to hear from you. I remain still a prisoner of hope, and do think it service to the Lord, to wait on still with submission, till the Lord's morning sky break, and his summer day dawn: for I am persuaded that it is a piece of the chief end of our life, which God sent us for some years down to this earth, among devils and men, the fire-brands of the Devil, and temptations, that we might suffer for a time here amongst our enemies; otherwise we might have made Heaven to wait on

[1] An object which we secretly regard as our chief good, different from that on which our affections are avowedly placed. [2] Past.

[3] Goods to be removed from one residence to another.

us, at our coming out of the womb, and have carried us home to our country, without letting us set down our feet in this knotty and thorny life. But seeing a piece of suffering is carved to every one of us, less or more, as Infinite Wisdom hath thought good, our part is to harden and habituate our soft and thin-skinned nature, to endure fire and water, devils, lions, men, losses, wo[1] hearts, as these that are looked upon by God, angels, men, and devils. Oh, what folly is it, to sit down and weep upon a decree of God, that is both deaf and dumb to our tears, and must stand still as unmovable as God who made it! for who can come behind our Lord, to alter, or better what he hath decreed and done? It were better to make windows in our prison, and to look out to God and our country, Heaven, and to cry, like fettered men, who long for the King's free air, "Lord, let thy kingdom come! Oh, let the Bridegroom come! And, O day, O fair day, O everlasting summer day, dawn and shine out, break out from under the black night-sky, and shine!" I am persuaded that, if every day a little stone in the prison walls were broken, and thereby assurance given to the chained prisoner lying under twenty stone of irons upon arms and legs, that at length his chain should wear into two pieces, and a hole should be made at length, as wide as he might come safely out to his long-desired liberty; he would, in patience, wait on, till time should holl[2] the prison wall and break his chains. The Lord's hopeful prisoners, under their trials, are in that case. Years and months will take out now one little stone, then another, of this house of clay, and at length time shall win[3] out the breadth of a fair door, and send out the imprisoned soul to the free air in Heaven; and time shall file off, by little and little, our iron bolts, which are now on legs and arms, and outdate, and wear our troubles threadbare, and full of holes, and then wear them to nothing;—for what I suffered yesterday, I know, shall never come again to trouble me.

Oh, that we could breathe out new hope and new submission every day, into Christ's lap! For certainly, a weight of glory, well weighed, yea, increasing to a far more exceeding and eternal weight, shall recompense both weight and length of light, and clipped and short-dated[4] crosses. Our waters are but ebb,[5] and come neither to our chin, nor to the stopping of our breath. I may see, (if I would borrow eyes from Christ,) dry land, and that near; why, then, should we not laugh at adversity, and scorn our short-born, and soon-dying temptations? I rejoice in the hope of that glory to be revealed, for it is no uncertain glory which we look for. Our hope is not hung upon such an untwisted thread, as, "I imagine so," or, "It is likely:" but the cable, the strong towe[6] of our fastened anchor, is the oath and promise of Him who is eternal verity; our salvation is fastened with God's own hand, and with Christ's own strength, to the strong stoup,[7] of God's unchangeable nature. (Mal. iii. 6,) "I am the Lord, I

1 Grieved. 2 Pierce through. 3 Get. 4 Transitory.
5 Shallow 6 Hawser. 7 Stake, post

change not; and, therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." We may play, and dance, and leap upon our worthy and immovable Rock; the ground is sure and good, and will bide[1] Hell's brangling, and devils' brangling, and the world's assaults.

Oh, if our faith could ride it out, against the high and proud waves and winds, when our sea seemeth to be all on fire! Oh, how oft do I let my grips[2] go! I am put to swimming and half sinking. I find that the Devil hath the advantage of the ground, in this battle; for he fighteth on known ground, in our corrupt nature. Alas! that is a friend near of kin and blood to himself, and will not fail to fall foul upon us: and hence it is, that He who saveth to the uttermost, and leadeth many sons to glory, is still righting my salvation, and twenty times a day I ravel my heaven, and then I must come with my ill-ravelled work to Christ, to cumber him (as it were,) to right it, and to seek again the right end of the thread, and to fold up again my eternal glory with his own hand, and to give a right cast of his holy and gracious hand to my marred and spilled[3] salvation. Certainly it is a cumbersome thing, to keep a foolish child from falls and broken brows, and weeping for this and that toy, and rash running, and sickness, and bairns' diseases; ere he win[4] through them all, and win[4] out of the mires, he costeth meikle black cumber and fashery[5] to his keepers: and so is a believer a cumbersome piece of work, and an ill-ravelled hesp,[6] (as we use to say,) to Christ; but God be thanked, for many spilled salvations, and many ill-ravelled hesps hath Christ mended, since first he entered Tutor to lost mankind. Oh, what could we, bairns, do without him! how soon would we mar all! But the less of our weight be upon our own feeble legs, and the more that we be on Christ the strong Rock, the better for us; it is good for us, that ever Christ took the cumber of us; it is our heaven, to lay many weights and burdens upon Christ, and to make him all we have, root and top, beginning and ending of our salvation. Lord hold us here.

Now to this tutor, and rich Lord, I recommend you. Hold fast till he come; and remember his prisoner.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his and your Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXC.

TO MR. WILLIAM DALGLEISH.

REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I received your letter. I bless your high and only wise Lord, who hath broken the snare that men had laid for you; and I hope, that now he will keep you in his house, in despite of the

[1] Stand. [2] Hold. [3] Spoiled. [4] Get.
[5] Unspeakable trouble and annoyance. [6] Hank of yarn.

powers of Hell. Who knoweth, but the streets of our Jerusalem shall yet be filled with young men, and with old men, and boys, and women with child; and that they shall plant vines in the mountains of Samaria? I am sure that the wheels, paces, and motions of this poor Church are tempered and ruled, not as men would, but according to the good pleasure and infinite wisdom of our only wise Lord.

I am here, waiting in hope that my innocency, in this honorable cause, shall melt this cloud that men have casten over me. I know that my Lord had his own quarrels against me, and that my dross stood in need of this hot furnace: but I rejoice in this, that fair truth, beautiful truth, (whose glory my Lord cleareth to me more and more,) beareth me company; and that my weak aims to honor my Master, in bringing guests to his house, now swell upon me in comforts; and that I am not afraid that I want a witness in Heaven, that it was my joy to have a crown put upon Christ's head in that country. Oh, what joy would I have, to see the wind turn upon the enemies of the cross of Christ, and to see my Lord Jesus restored, with the voice of praise, to his own free throne again; and to be brought amongst you, to see the beauty of the Lord's house!

I hope that country will not be so silly, as to suffer men to pluck you away from them; and, that ye will use means to keep my place empty and to bring me back again to the people, to whom I have Christ's right and his Church's lawful calling.

Dear brother, let Christ be dearer and dearer to you; let the conquest[1] of souls be top and root, flower and bloom of your joys and desires, on this side of sun and moon; and in the day, when the Lord shall pull up the four stakes of this clay tent of the earth, and the last pickle[2] of sand shall be at the nick[3] of falling down in your watch-glass, and the master shall call the servants of the vineyard to give them their hire, ye will esteem the bloom of this world's glory like the colors of the rainbow, that no man can put into his purse and treasure; your labor and pains will then smile upon you.

My Lord now hath given me experience, (howbeit weak and small,) that our best fare here is hunger. We are but at God's by-board,[4] in this lower house; we have cause to long for supper-time, and the high table, up in the high palace; this world deserveth nothing, but the outer court of our soul. Lord, hasten the marriage-supper of the Lamb. I find it still peace to give up with this present world, as with an old decourted[5] and cast-off lover: my bread and drink in it, is not so much worth that I should not loathe the inns, and pack up my desires for Christ, whom I have sent out to the feckless[6] creatures in it. Grace, grace be with you.

Your affectionate brother, and Christ's prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

1 Acquisition. 2 Grain 3 Point.
4 Side-table. 5 Discarded. 6 Feeble, worthless

LETTER CXCI.

TO THE LAIRD OF CALLY.

Much Honored Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you—I long to hear how your soul prospereth! I have that confidence that your soul mindeth Christ and salvation. I beseech you, in the Lord, to give more pains and diligence to fetch Heaven, than the country-sort of lazy professors, who think their own faith and their own godliness, because it is their own, best; and content themselves with a cold-rife [1] custom and course, with a resolution to summer and winter in that sort of profession which the multitude and the times favor most; and are still shaping and clipping and carving their faith, according as it may best stand with their summer sun and a whole skin; and so breathe out both hot and cold in God's matters, according to the course of the times: this is their compass which they sail toward Heaven by, instead of a better. Worthy, and dear sir, separate yourself from such, and bend yourself to the utmost of your strength and breath, in running fast for salvation: and, in taking Christ's kingdom, use violence. It cost Christ and all his followers sharp showers and hot sweats, ere they won [2] to the top of the mountain: but still our soft nature would have heaven coming to our bed-side, when we are sleeping, and lying down with us, that we might go to Heaven in warm clothes; but all that came there, found wet feet by the way, and sharp storms, that did take the skin off their face, and found tos and fros, and ups and downs, and many enemies by the way.

It is impossible that a man can take his lusts to Heaven with him; such wares as these will not be welcome there. Oh, how loth are we to forego our packalds [3] and burdens, that hinder us to run our race with patience! It is no small work to displease and anger nature, that we may please God. Oh, if [4] it be hard to win one foot or half an inch out of our own will, our own wit, out of our own ease and worldly lusts; and so to deny ourself and to say, "It is not I but Christ, not I but grace, not I but God's glory, not I but God's love constraining me, not I but the Lord's word, not I but Christ's commanding power in me!" Oh, what pains, and what a death is it to nature, to turn me, myself, my lust, my ease, my credit, over unto my Lord, my Saviour, my King, and my God, my Lord's will, my Lord's grace! But alas! that idol, that whorish creature, myself, is the master-idol we all bow to. What made Evah miscarry? and what hurried her headlong upon the forbidden fruit, but that wretched thing herself? What drew that brother-murderer to kill Abel? that wild himself. What drove the old world on to corrupt their ways? what, but themselves, and their own pleasure? What was the cause of Solomon's falling into adultery and multiplying of

[1] Cold, indifferent. [2] Got. [3] Wallets. [4] Oh, but.

strange wives? what, but himself, whom he would rather pleasure than God? What was the hook that took David and snared him first in adultery, but his self-lust; and then in murder, but his self-credit and self-honor? What led Peter on to deny his Lord? was it not a piece of himself, and self-love to a whole skin? What made Judas sell his Master for thirty pieces of money, but a piece of self-love, idolizing of avaricious self? What made Demas to go off the way of the Gospel, to embrace this present world? even self-love and love of gain for himself. Every man blameth the Devil for his sins; but the great devil, the house-devil of every man, the house-devil that eateth and lyeth in every man's bosom, is that idol that killeth all, himself. Oh, blessed are they, who can deny themselves, and put Christ in the room of themselves! Oh, would to the Lord, that I had not a myself, but Christ; nor, a my lust, but Christ; nor, a my ease, but Christ; nor, a my honor, but Christ! Oh, sweet word! (Gal. ii. 20,) "I live no more, but Christ liveth in me!" Oh, if every one would put away himself, his own self, his own ease, his own pleasure, his own credit, and his own twenty things, his own hundred things, which he setteth up, as idols, above Christ! Dear sir, I know that ye will be looking back to your old self, and to your self-lust and self-idol, which ye set up in the lusts of youth, above Christ.

Worthy sir, pardon this my freedom of love. God is my witness, that it is out of an earnest desire after your soul's eternal welfare, that I use this freedom of speech. Your sun, I know, is lower, and your evening sky and sun-setting nearer than when I saw you last: strive to end your task before night, and to make Christ, yourself, and to acquaint your love and your heart with the Lord. Stand now by Christ and his truth, when so many fall foully, and are false to him. I hope that ye love him and his truth: let me have power with you to confirm you in him. I think more of my Lord's sweet cross than of a crown of gold, and a free kingdom lying to it.

Sir, I remember you in my prayers to the Lord, according to my promise. Help me with your prayers, that our Lord would be pleased to bring me amongst you again, with the Gospel of Christ.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweetest Lord, and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXCII.

TO JOHN GORDON, OF CARDONESS, YOUNGER.

DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I long exceedingly to hear of the case of your soul, which hath a large share both of my prayers and careful thoughts.

Sir, remember that a precious treasure and prize is upon this short play that ye are now upon; even the eternity of well or wo to your soul standeth upon the little point of your well or ill employed short and swift posting sand-glass.[1] Seek the Lord while he may be found; the Lord waiteth upon you. Your soul is of no little price. Gold or silver of as much bounds as would cover the highest heaven round about cannot buy it. To live as others do, and to be free of open sins, that the world crieth shame upon, will not bring you to Heaven. As much civility and country discretion as would lye between you and Heaven, will not lead you one foot or one inch above condemned nature; and therefore take pains upon seeking of salvation, and give your will, wit, humor, the green desires of youth's pleasures, off your hand to Christ. It is not possible for you to know till experience teach you, how dangerous a time youth is: it is like green and wet timber; when Christ casteth fire on it, it taketh not fire. There is need here of more than ordinary pains, for corrupt nature hath a good back-friend of youth: and sinning against light will put out your candle, and stupify your conscience, and bring upon it more coverings and skin, and the feeling and sense of guiltiness; and when that is done, the Devil is like a mad horse that hath broken his bridle, and runneth away with his rider whither he listeth. Learn to know that which the Apostle knew—the deceitfulness of sin. Strive to make prayer, and reading, and holy company, and holy conference your delight; and when delight cometh in, ye shall by little and little smell the sweetness of Christ, till at length your soul be over head and ears in Christ's sweetness. Then shall ye be taken up to the top of the mountain with the Lord, to know the ravishments of spiritual love, and the glory and excellency of a seen, revealed, felt, and embraced Christ: and then ye shall not be able to loose yourself off Christ, and to bind your soul to old lovers: then, and never till then, are all the paces, motions, walkings, and wheels of your soul in a right tune, and in a spiritual temper.

But if this world and the lusts thereof be your delight, I know not what Christ can make of you; ye cannot be metal to be a vessel of glory and mercy. As the Lord liveth, thousand thousands are beguiled with security, because God, and wrath, and judgment are not terrible to them. Stand in awe of God, and of the warnings of a checking and rebuking conscience. Make others to see Christ in you, moving, doing, speaking and thinking: your actions will smell of him, if he be in you. There is an instinct in the new-born babes of Christ, like the instinct of nature that leads birds to build their nests, and bring forth their young, and love such and such places, as woods, forests, and wilderness, better than other places. The instinct of nature maketh a man love his mother-country, above all countries; the instinct of renewed nature and supernatural grace, will lead you to such and such works, as to love your country above, to sigh to be clothed with

[1] Hour-glass.

your house not made with hands, and to call your borrowed prison here below, a borrowed prison; and to look upon it servant-like and pilgrim-like: and the pilgrim's eye and look is a disdainful-like discontented cast of his eye, his heart crying after his eye, "Fy, fy, this is not like my country."

I recommend to you the mending of a hole, and reforming of a failing, one or other, every week; and put off a sin or a piece of it, as of anger, wrath, lust, intemperance, every day, that ye may more easily master the remnant of your corruption. God hath given you a wife; love her, and let her breasts satisfy you; and, for the Lord's sake, drink no waters, but out of your own cistern: strange wells are poison. Strive to learn some new way against your corruptions from the man of God, Mr. William Dalgleish, or other servants of God. Sleep not sound, till ye find yourself in that case, that ye dare look death in the face and durst hazard your soul upon eternity. I am sure, that many ells and inches of the short thread of your life are by-hand[1] since I saw you: and that thread hath an end; and ye have no hand to cast a knot, and add one day or a finger-breadth to the end of it. When hearing, and seeing, and the outer walls of the clay-house shall fall down, and life shall render the besieged castle of clay to death and judgment, and ye find your time worn ebb[2] and run out, what thoughts will you then have of idol-pleasures that possibly are now sweet? what bud[3] or hire would you then give for the Lord's favor? and what a price would ye then give for pardon? It were not amiss to think, "What if I were to receive a doom, and to enter into a furnace of fire and brimstone? what if it come to this, that I shall have no portion but utter darkness? and what if I be brought to this, to be banished from the presence of God, and to be given over to God's serjeants, the Devil, and the power of the Second Death?" Put your soul, by supposition, in such a case, and consider what horror would take hold of you, and what ye would then esteem of pleasing yourself in the course of sin. Oh, dear sir, for the Lord's sake awake to live righteously, and love your poor soul! and after ye have seen this my letter, say with yourself, "The Lord wil seek an account of this warning which I have received."

Lodge Christ in your family. Receive no stranger hireling as your pastor. I bless your children. Grace be with you.

Your lawful and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXCIII.

TO ROBERT GORDON, BAILLIE OF AYR.

WORTHY SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I long to hear from you. Our Lord is with his afflicted Kirk, so that this

[1] Gone past. [2] Shallow. [3] Bribe.

burning bush is not consumed to ashes. I know that submissive on-waiting for the Lord will at length ripen the joy and deliverance of his own, who are truly blessed on-waiters. What is the dry and miscarrying hope of all them who are not in Christ, but confusion and wind? Oh, how pitifully and miserably are the children of this world beguiled, whose wine cometh home to them, water, and their gold, brass and tin! And what wonder, that hopes builded upon sand should fall and sink? It were good for us all to abandon the forlorn, and blasted, and withered hope, which we have had in the creature; and let us henceforth come and drink water out of our own well, even the fountain of living waters, and build ourselves and our hope upon Christ, our Rock. But, alas! that that natural love, which we have to this borrowed home, that we were born in; and that this clay city, the vain earth, should have the largest share of our heart! Our poor, lean, and empty dreams of confidence in something beside God, are no further travelled than up and down the noughty[1] and feckless[1] creatures. God may say of us, as he said, (Amos vi. 13,) "Ye rejoice in a thing of nought." Surely we spin our spider's web with pain, and build our rotten and tottering house upon a lie, and falsehood, and vanity.

Oh, when will we learn to have thoughts higher than the sun and moon, and learn our joy, hope, confidence, and our soul's desires, to look up to our best country, and to look down to clay tents set up for a night's lodging or two in this unknown land, and laugh at our childish conceptions and imaginations, that suck our joy out of creatures, wo, sorrow, losses, and grief! "O sweetest Lord Jesus! O fairest Godhead! O Flower of men and angels! why are we such strangers to, and far-off beholders of thy glory." Oh, it were our happiness for evermore, that God would cast a pest, a botch, a leprosy, upon our part of this great whore, a fair and well-busked[3] world, that clay might no longer deceive us! But oh, that God may burn and blast our hope hereaway,[4] rather than that our hope should live to burn us! Alas, the wrong side of Christ, to speak so, his black side, his suffering side, his wounds, his bare coat, his wants, his wrongs, the oppressions of men done to him, are turned towards men's eyes; and they see not the best and fairest side of Christ, nor see they his amiable face and his beauty, that men and angels wonder at.

Sir, lend your thoughts to these things, and learn to contemn this world, and to turn your eyes and heart away from beholding the masked beauty of all things under time's law and doom. See Him who is invisible and his invisible things; draw by[5] the curtain, and look in with liking and longing to a kingdom undefiled, that fadeth not away, reserved for you in the Heaven. This is worthy of your pains, and worthy of your soul's sweating, and laboring, and seeking after, night and day. Fire will flee[6] over the earth, and all that is in it; even destruction from the Almighty.

[1] Having nothing in it. [2] Unsubstantial. [3] Gaily decked.
[4] In this present sense. [5] Aside. [6] Fly.

Fy, fy upon that hope, that shall be dried up by the root! Fy upon the drunken night bargains, and the drunken and mad covenants, that sinners make with death and Hell after cups, and when men's souls are mad and drunken with the love of this lawless life. They think to make a nest for their hopes, and take quarters and conditions of Hell and death, that they shall have ease, long life, peace; and in the morning, when the Last Trumpet shall awake them, then they rue the block.[1] It is time, and high time for you, to think upon death and your accounts, and to remember what ye are, and where ye will be before the year of our Lord 1700. I hope ye are thinking upon this. Pull at your soul, and draw it aside from the company that it is with, and round and whisper into it news of eternity, death, judgment, Heaven and Hell.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXCIV.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF EARLSTON.

Much Honored Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—It is like, if ye, the gentry and nobility of this nation, be men in the streets, as the word speaketh, for the Lord, that he will now deliver his flock, and gather and rescue his scattered sheep, from the hands of cruel and rigorous lords, that have ruled over them with force. Oh, that mine eyes might see the moon-light turn to the light of the sun! But I still fear that the quarrel of a broken covenant in Scotland standeth before the Lord.

However it be, I avouch it before the world, that the tabernacle of the Lord shall again be in the midst of Scotland, and the glory of the Lord shall dwell in beauty, as the light of many days in one, in this land. Oh, what could my soul desire more, next to my Lord Jesus, while I am in this flesh, but that Christ and his kingdom might be great among Jews and Gentiles; and that the isles, (and amongst them overclouded and darkened Britain,) might have the glory of a noon-day's sun! Oh, that I had anything, (I will not except my part in Christ,) to wadset[2] or lay in pledge, to redeem and buy such glory to my highest and royal Prince, my sweet Lord Jesus! My poor little heaven were well bestowed, if it could stand a pawn forever, to set on high the glory of my Lord; but I know that he needeth not wages nor hire at my hand; yea, I know, if my eternal glory could weigh down in weight its lone,[3] all the eternal glory of the blessed angels, and of all the spirits of just and perfect men, glorified and to be glorified,

[1] Bargain. [2] Alienate. [3] By itself alone.

oh, alas! how far am I engaged to forego it for, and give it over to Christ, so being he might thereby be set on high above ten thousand thousand millions of heavens, in the conquest of many, many nations to his kingdom! Oh, that his kingdom would come! Oh, that all the world would stoop before him! Oh, blessed hands that shall put the crown upon Christ's head in Scotland! But, alas! I can scarce get leave to ware[1] my love on him: I can find no ways to lay out my heart upon Christ; and my love, that I with my soul bestow on him, is like to die upon my hand, and I think it no bairns' play to be hungered with Christ's love. To love him, and to want him, wanteth little of Hell. I am sure that he knoweth how my joy would swell upon me, from a little well to a great sea, to have as much of his love, and as wide a soul answerable to comprehend it, till I cried, "Hold, Lord, no more." But I find that he will not have me to be mine own steward, nor mine own carver. Christ keepeth the keys of Christ, (to speak so,) and of his own love, and he is a wiser distributer than I can take up: I know that there is more in him than would make me run over like a coast-ful sea. I were happy for evermore, to get leave to stand but beside Christ and his love, and to look in, suppose I were interdicted of God to come near-hand,[2] touch, or embrace, kiss, or set to my sinful head, and drink myself drunk with that lovely thing. God send me that which I would have; for I now verily see, more clearly than before, our folly in drinking dead waters, and in playing the whore with our soul's love upon running-out wells, and broken sherds of creatures of yesterday, which time will unlaw[3] with the penalty of losing their being and natural ornaments. Oh, when a soul's love is itching, (to speak so,) for God; and when Christ, in his boundless and bottomless love, beauty, and excellency, cometh and rubbeth up and exciteth that love, what can be heaven, if this be not heaven? I am sure that this bit feckless,[4] narrow and short love of regenerated sinners, was born for no other end, than to breathe, and live, and love, and dwell in the bosom and betwixt the breasts of Christ. Where is there a bed or a lodging for the saints' love, but Christ? Oh, that he would take ourselves off our hand! for neither we, nor the creatures can be either due conquest[5] or lawful heritage to love: Christ, and none but Christ, is lord and proprietor of it. Oh, alas, how pitiful is it, that so much of our love goeth by[6] him! Oh, but we be wretched wasters of our soul's love! I know it to be the depth of bottomless and unsearchable providence, that the saints are suffered to play the whore from God, and that their love goeth a-hunting, when God knoweth that it shall roast nothing of that at supper time. The renewed would have it otherwise; and why is it so, seeing our Lord can keep us without nodding, tottering, or reeling, or any fall at all? Our desires, I hope, shall meet with perfection: but God will have our sins an office-house for God's grace, and hath

[1] Expend, lay out. [2] Near. [3] Fine, amerce.
[4] Feeble. [5] Acquisition by purchase or industry. [6] Past.

made sin a matter of an unlaw[1] and penalty for the Son of God's blood: and howbeit sin should be our sorrow, yet there is a sort of acquiescing and resting upon God's dispensation required of us, that there is such a thing in us as sin, whereupon mercy, forgiveness, healing, curing, in our sweet physician, may find a field to work upon. Oh, what a deep is here, that created wisdom cannot take up! However matters go, it is our happiness to win new ground daily in Christ's love, and to purchase a new piece of it daily, and to add conquest[2] to conquest,[2] till our Lord Jesus and we be so near each other, that Satan shall not draw a straw or a thread betwixt us.

And, for myself, I have no greater joy, in my well-favored bonds for Christ, than that I know time will put him and me together; and that my love and longing hath room and liberty, amidst my bonds and foes, (whereof there are not a few here of all ranks,) to go to visit the borders, and outer coasts of the country of my Lord Jesus, and see, at least afar off and darkly, the country which shall be mine inheritance, which is the due of my Lord Jesus, both through birth and conquest.[2] I dare avouch to all that know God, that the saints know not the length and largeness of the sweet earnest and of the sweet green sheaves before the harvest, that might be had on this side of the water, if we would take more pains: and that we all go to Heaven with less earnest, and lighter purses of the hoped-for sum, than otherwise we might do, if we took more pains to win further in upon Christ, in this pilgrimage of our absence from him.

Grace, grace and glory be your portion.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXCV.

TO ROBERT STUART.

My very dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Ye are heartily welcome to my world of suffering, and heartily welcome to my Master's house: God give you much joy of your new Master. If I have been in the house before you, I were not faithful to give the house an ill name, or to speak evil of the Lord of the family; I rather wish God's holy Spirit,—O Lord, breathe upon me with that Spirit,—to tell you the fashions of the house. One thing I can say, by on-waiting ye will grow a great man with the Lord of the house. Hang on till ye get some good from Christ. Lay all your loads and your weights by faith upon Christ; take ease to yourself, and let him bear all: he can, he dow,[3] he will bear you, howbeit Hell were upon your back. I rejoice that he is come, and hath chosen you in the furnace; it

[1] A fine. [2] Acquisition by purchase or industry. [3] Is able.

was even there where ye and he set tryst.[1] That is an old gate[2] of Christ's: he keepeth the good old fashion with you, that was in Hosea's days. (Hos. ii. 14,) "There, behold, I will allure her, and bring her to the wilderness, and speak to her heart." There was no talking to her heart, while he and she were in the fair and flourishing city, and at ease; but out in the cold, hungry, waste wilderness, he allureth her; he whispered news into her ear there, and said, "Thou art mine." What would ye think of such a bode?[3] Ye may soon do worse than say, "Lord, hold all;[4] Lord Jesus, a bargain be it, it shall not go back on my side."

Ye have gotten a great advantage in the way to Heaven that ye have started to the gate[5] in the morning. Like a fool, as I was, I suffered my sun to be high in the heaven, and near afternoon, before ever I took the gate[5] by the end. I pray you now keep the advantage ye have. My heart, be not lazy; set quickly up the brae[6] on hands and feet, as if the last pickle of sand were running out of your glass, and death were coming to turn the glass: and be very careful to take heed to your feet, in that slippery and dangerous way of youth, that ye are walking in. The Devil and temptations now have the advantage of the brae of you, and are upon your wand-hand[7] and your working-hand.[7] Dry timber will soon take fire. Be covetous and greedy of the grace of God, and beware that it be not holiness which cometh only from the cross; for too many are that way disposed. (Psalm lxxviii. 34,) "When he slew them then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God." (Ver. 36,) "Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues." It is a part of our hypocrisy, to give God fair white-words,[8] when he hath us in his grips,[9] (if I may speak so,) and to flatter him till we win[10] to the fair fields again. Try well green godliness, and examine what it is that ye love in Christ. If ye love but Christ's sunny side, and would have only summer weather and a land-gate,[11] not a sea-way to Heaven, your profession will play you a slip, and the winter-well will go dry again in summer.

Make no sports nor bairns' play of Christ; but labor for a sound and lively sight of sin, that ye may judge yourself an undone man, a damned slave of Hell and of sin, one dying in your own blood, except Christ come and rue upon you, and take you up; and, therefore, make sure and fast work of conversion. Cast the earth deep; and down, down with the old work, the building of confusion that was there before; and let Christ lay new work, and make a new creation within you. Look if Christ's rain goeth down to the root of your withered plants, and if his love wound

[1] Made appointment to meet. [2] Custom manner. [3] Offer.
[4] Let all that has been said hold good: an expression used in accepting an offer, equivalent to *done* in English. [5] Road. [6] Hill.
[7] The hand which holds the wand or whip that is used to drive a horse in working. *Working-hand*, the hand which guides the horse. *To be upon one's wand-hand and working hand*, to beset one on every side. [8] Cajoling speeches.
[9] Gripe. [10] Get. [11] Way by land

your heart whill it bleed with sorrow for sin, and if ye can pant and fall a-swoon,[1] and be like to die for that lovely One, Jesus. I know that Christ will not be hid where he is; grace will ever speak for itself, and be fruitful in well-doing; the sanctified cross is a fruitful tree, it bringeth forth many apples.

If I should tell you by some weak experience, what I have found in Christ, ye or others could hardly believe me. I thought not the hundredth part of Christ long since, that I do now, though, alas! my thoughts are still infinitely below his worth. I have a dwining,[2] sickly, and pained life, for a real possession of him; and am troubled with love-brashes[3] and love-fevers; but it is a sweet pain. I would refuse no conditions, not Hell excepted, (reserving always God's hatred,) to buy possession of Jesus: but, alas! I am not a merchant, who have any money to give for him: I must either come to a good-cheap[4] market, where wares are had for nothing, else I go home empty. But I have casten[5] this work upon Christ to get me himself. I have his faith, and truth, and promise, (as a pawn of his,) all engaged that I shall obtain that which my hungry desires would be at, and I esteem that the choice of my happiness; and for Christ's cross, especially the garland and flower of all crosses, to suffer for his name, I esteem it more than I can write or speak to you. And I write it under mine own hand to you, that it is one of the steps of the ladder up to our country, and Christ, (whoever be one,) is still at the heavy end of this black tree, and so it is but as a feather to me. I need not run at leisure, because of a burden on my back: my back never bare the like of it; the more heavily crossed for Christ, the soul is still the lighter for the journey.

Now, would to God that all cold-blooded, faint-hearted soldiers of Christ would look again to Jesus, and to his love; and when they look, I would have them to look again and again, and fill themselves with beholding of Christ's beauty; and I dare say then, that Christ would come into great court[6] and request with many. The virgins would flock fast about the Bridegroom; they would embrace and take hold of him, and not let him go:—but when I have spoken of him, till my head rive, I have said just nothing, I may begin again. A God-head, a God-head is a world's wonder. Set ten thousand thousand new-made worlds of angels and elect men, and double them in number, ten thousand, thousand, thousand times; let their heart and tongues be ten thousand thousand times more agile and large, than the heart and tongues of the seraphims that stand with six wings before him, (Isa. vi. 2,) when they have said all for the glorifying and praising of the Lord Jesus, they have but spoken little or nothing; his love will abide all possible creatures to praise. Oh, if[7] I could wear this tongue to the stump, in extolling his highness! But it is my daily-growing sorrow, that I am confounded with his incomparable love, and that he doeth so great things for my soul, and hath got never yet

[1] Into a swoon. [2] Pining. [3] Fits of love-sickness.
[4] Gratuitous. [5] Cast. [6] Favor. [7] Oh, that.

anything of me worth the speaking of. Sir, I charge you, help me to praise him: it is a shame to speak of what he hath done for me, and what I do to him again. I am sure that Christ hath many drowned dyvours[1] in Heaven beside him: and when we are convened, man and angel, at the great day, in that fair last meeting, we are all but his drowned dyvours:[1] it is hard to say, who oweth him most. If men could do no more, I would have them to wonder: if we cannot be filled with Christ's love, we may be filled with wondering.

Sir, I would that I could persuade you to grow sick for Christ, and to long after him, and be pained with love for himself:—but His tongue is in Heaven who can do it! To him and his rich grace I recommend you.

I pray you, pray for me, and forget not to praise.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 17, 1637.

LETTER CXCVI.

TO THE LADY GAITGIRTH.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I long to know how matters stand betwixt Christ and your soul. I know that ye find him still the longer the better; time cannot change him in his love: ye may yourself ebb and flow, rise and fall, wax and wane; but your Lord is this day as he was yesterday; and it is your comfort that your salvation is not rolled upon wheels of your own making, neither have ye to do with a Christ of your own shaping. God hath singled out a Mediator, strong and mighty: if ye and your burdens were as heavy as ten hills or hells, he is able to bear you, and save you to the uttermost. Your often seeking to him, cannot make you a burden to him. I know that Christ compassioneth you, and maketh a moan[2] for you, in all your dumps, and under your down-castings; but it is good for you, that he hideth himself sometimes. It is not niceness, dryness, nor coldness of love, that causeth Christ to withdraw, and slip in under a curtain and a veil, that ye cannot see him; but he knoweth that ye could not bear with upsails, a fair gale, a full moon and a high spring-tide of his felt love, and always a fair summer-day and a summer-sun of a felt and possessed and embracing Lord Jesus. His kisses and his visits to his dearest ones are thin-sown. He could not let out his rivers of love upon his own, but these rivers would be in hazard of loosening a young plant at the root; and he knoweth this of you. Ye should, therefore, frist[3] Christ's kindness, as to its sensible and full manifestations, till ye and he be above sun and moon: that is the country where ye will be enlarged for that love which ye dow not[4] now contain.

[1] Bankrupts.
[2] Bemoaneth.
[3] Postpone the possession of.
[4] Are not able.

Cast the burden of your sweet babes upon Christ, and lighten your heart, by laying your all upon him: he will be their God. I hope to see you up the mountain yet, and glad in the salvation of God. Frame yourself for Christ, and gloom[1] not upon his cross. I find him so sweet, that my love, suppose I would charge it to remove from Christ, would not obey me: his love hath stronger fingers than to let go its grips[2] of us, bairns, who cannot go but by such a hold as Christ. It is good that we want legs of our own, since we may borrow from Christ; and it is our happiness that Christ is under an act of cautionry[3] for Heaven, and that Christ is booked in Heaven, as the principal debtor, for such poor bodies as we are.

I request you, to give the Laird, your husband, thanks for his care of me, in that he hath appeared, in public, for a prisoner of Christ. I pray and write mercy, and peace, and blessings to him and his.

Grace, grace be with you forever.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXCVII.

TO MR. JOHN FERGUSHILL.

Reverend and dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—My longings and desires for a sight of the new-builded tabernacle of Christ again in Scotland, that tabernacle that came down from Heaven, hath now taken some life again, when I see Christ making a mint[4] to sow vengeance among his enemies. I care not, if this land be ripe for such a great wonderful mercy; but I know, he must do it, whenever it is done, without hire. I find the grief of my silence, and my fear to be holden at the door of Christ's house, swelling upon me; and the truth is, were it not that I am dawted[5] now and then with pieces of Christ's sweet love and comforts, I fear I should have made an ill browst[6] of this honorable cross, that I know such a soft and silly-minded body as I am, is not worthy of: for I have little in me but softness, and superlative and excessive apprehensions of fear, and sadness, and sorrow; and often God's terrors do surround me, because Christ looketh not so favorably upon me, as a poor witness would have him; and I wonder, how I have passed a year and a quarter's imprisonment, without shaming my sweet Lord to whom I desire to be faithful: and I think I shall die but[7] even minting[8] and aiming to serve and honor my Lord Jesus. Few know how toom[9] and empty I am at home; but it is a part of marriage-love and

1 Frown. 2 Hold, gripe. 3 Suretyship.
4 Indication, by signs, of an intention. 5 Cockered.
6 The quantity of ale brewed at one time; metaphorically, the consequences of one's conduct. 7 Without. 8 Intimating an intention. 9 Empty.

husband-love, that my Lord Jesus goeth not to the streets with his chiding against me: it is but stolen and concealed anger that I find and feel, and his glooms[1] to me are kept under roof, that he will not have mine enemies hear what is betwixt me and him. And, believe me, I say the truth in Christ, that the only gall and wormwood in my cup, and that which hath filled me with fear, hath been, lest my sins, that sun and moon and the Lord's children were never witness to, should have moved my Lord to strike me with dumb Sabbaths:—Lord, pardon my soft and weak jealousies,[2] if I here be in an error.

My very dear brother, I would have looked for larger and more particular letters from you, for my comfort in this; for your words before have strengthened me. I pray you to mend this, and be thankful and painful, while ye have a piece or corner of the Lord's vineyard to dress. Oh, would to God that I could have leave to follow you to break the clods! But I wish I could command my soul to be silent, and to wait upon the Lord. I am sure, that while Christ lives, I am well enough friend-stead.[3] I hope that he will extend his kindness and power for me; but God be thanked it is not worse with me, than a cross for Christ and his truth. I know that he might have pitched upon many more choice and worthy witnesses, if he had pleased; but I seek no more, (be what timber I will, suppose I were made of a piece of Hell,) than that my Lord, in his infinite art, hew glory to his name, and enlargement to Christ's Kingdom, out of me. Oh, that I could attain to this, to desire that my part of Christ might be laid in pledge for the heightening of Christ's throne in Britain! Let my Lord redeem the pledge, or, if he please, let it sink and drown unredeemed. But what can I add to him? or what way can a smothered and borne-down prisoner set out Christ in open market, as a lovely and desirable Lord, to many souls? I know that he seeth to his own glory, better than my ebb[4] thoughts can dream of; and that the wheels and paces of this poor distempered Kirk are in his hands, and that things shall roll as Christ will have them:—only, Lord tryst[5] the matter so, as Christ may be made a householder and lord again in Scotland, and wet faces for his departure may be dried at his sweet and much desired welcome home. I see, that in all our trials, our Lord will not mix our wares and his grace over-head through other;[6] but he will have each man to know his own, that the like of me may say in my sufferings, "This is Christ's grace, and this is but my coarse stuff: this is free grace, and this is but nature and reason." We know what our legs would play us, if they should carry us through all our waters; and the least thing our Lord can have of us, is, to know we are grace's debtors or grace's dyvours[7] and that nature is off[8] a base house and blood, and grace is better born, and of kin and blood to Christ, and off[8] a better house. Oh, that I were

[1] Frowns. [2] Suspicions. [3] Befriended.
[4] Shallow. [5] Appoint, arrange.
[6] One with another, promiscuously. [7] Bankrupts [8] Descended from.

free of that idol, which they call Myself; and that Christ were for Myself, and Myself a decourted[1] cypher, and a denied and foresworn thing! But that proud thing, Myself, will not play, except it ride up side for side with Christ, or rather have place before him. O Myself,—another devil, as evil as the Prince of devils!—if thou couldest give Christ the way, and take thine own room, which is to sit as low as nothing or corruption! Oh, but we have much need to be ransomed and redeemed by Christ, from that master-tyrant, that cruel and lawless lord, Ourself. Nay, when I am seeking Christ, and am out of myself, I have the third part of a squint eye upon that vain, vain thing, Myself, Myself, and something of mine own:—but I must hold here.

I desire you to contribute your help, to see if I can be restored to my wasted and lost flock. I see not how it can be, except the lords would procure me a liberty to preach: and they have reason; 1. Because the opposers and my adversaries have practised their new canons upon me, whereof one is, That no deprived minister preach, under the pain of excommunication. 2. Because my opposing of these canons, was a special thing that incensed Sydserf[2] against me. 3. Because I was judicially accused for my book against the Arminians, and commanded by the Chancellor, to acknowledge that I had done a fault in writing against Dr. Jackson, a wicked Arminian. Pray for a room in the house to me.

Grace, grace be, (as it is,) your portion.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXCVIII.

TO JOHN STUART, PROVOST OF AYR.

Worthy Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I long for the time, when I shall see the beauty of the Lord in his house; and would be as glad of it as of any sight on earth, to see the halt, the blind, and the lame, come back to Zion with supplications, (Jer. xxxi. 8, 9,) "Going and weeping, and seeking the Lord, asking the way to Zion with their faces thitherward," (Jer. l. 4, 5;) and to see the Woman travailing in birth, delivered of the man-child of a blessed reformation. If this land were humbled, I would look that our skies should clear, and our day dawn again; and ye should then bless Christ, who is content to save your travel, and to give himself to you, in pure ordinances on this side of the sea. I know the mercy of Christ is engaged by promise to Scotland, notwithstanding he bring wrath, as I fear he will, upon this land.

I am waiting on for enlargement, and half content that my faith bow, if Christ, while he bow it, keep it unbroken; for who goeth through a fire without a mark or a scald? I see the Lord

[1] Discarded. [2] The bishop of Galloway.

making use of this fire, to scour his vessels from their rust. Oh, that my will were silent, and "as a child weaned from the breasts!" (Psalm cxxxi.) But, alas! who hath an heart that will give Christ the last word in flyting,[1] and will hear, and not speak again? Oh! contestations[2] and quarrelous replies (as a soon-saddled spirit, "I do well to be angry even to the death,") (Jonah iv. 9,) smell of the stink of strong corruption. Oh, blessed soul that could sacrifice his will, and go to Heaven, having lost his will and made resignation of it to Christ! I would seek no more, than that Christ were absolute King over my will, and that my will were a sufferer in all crosses, without meeting Christ with such a word, "Why is it thus?" I wish still, that my love had but leave to stand beside beautiful Jesus, and to get the mercy of looking to him, and burning for him, suppose that possession of him were suspended and fristed[3] till my Lord fold together the leaves and two sides of the little shepherds' tents of clay. Oh, what pain is in longing for Christ, under an over-clouded and eclipsed assurance! What is harder than to burn and dwine[4] with longing and deaths of love, and then to have blanks and uninked paper for assurance of Christ in real fruition or possession? Oh, how sweet were one line or half a letter of a written assurance under Christ's own hand! But this is our exercise daily, that guiltiness shall overmist[5] and darken assurance. It is a miracle to believe, but for a sinner to believe is two miracles. But oh, what obligations of love are we under to Christ, who beareth with our wild apprehensions, in suffering them to nickname sweet Jesus, and to put a lie upon his good name! If he had not been God, and if long-suffering in Christ were not like Christ himself, we should long ago have broken Christ's mercies into two pieces, and put an iron bar on our salvation, that mercy should not have been able to break or overleap; but long-suffering in God, is God himself, and that is our salvation, and the stability of our heaven is in God. He knew, (who said, "Christ in you the hope of glory," (Col. i. 27;) for our hope and the bottom and pillars of it is Christ-God,) that sinners are anchor-fast and made stable in God; so that if God do not change, (which is impossible,) then my hope shall not fluctuate. Oh, sweet stability of sure-bottomed salvation! Who could win[6] Heaven, if this were not so? and who could be saved, if God were not God, and if he were not such a God as he is? Oh, God be thanked that our salvation is coasted, and landed, and shored upon Christ, who is Master of winds and storms! And what sea-winds can blow the coast or the land out of its place? Bulwarks are often casten down, but coasts are not removed: but suppose that were or might be, yet God cannot reel nor remove. Oh, that we go from this strong and immovable Lord, and that we loosen ourselves, (if it were in our power,) from him! Alas, our green and young love hath not taken with Christ, being unacquainted with him: he is such a wide, and broad, and deep,

[1] Chiding. [2] Altercations. [3] Postponed.
[4] Pine away. [5] Becloud. [6] Attain to.

and high, and surpassing sweetness, that our love is too little for him. But oh, if[1] our love, little as it is, could take band[2] with his great and huge sweetness, and transcendent excellency! Oh, thrice blessed, and eternally blessed are they, who are out of themselves, and above themselves, that they may be in love united to him!

I am often rollingup and down the thoughts of my faint and sick desires of expressing Christ's glory before his people; but I see not through the throng of impediments, and cannot find eyes to look higher, and so I put many things in Christ's way to hinder him, that I know he would but laugh at, and with one stride set his foot over them all. I know not if my Lord will bring me to his sanctuary or not: but I know that he hath the placing of me, either within or without the house, and that nothing will be done without him. But I am often thinking and saying within myself, that my days flee away, and I see no good, neither yet Christ's work thriving; and it is like that the grave shall prevent the answer of my desires of saving of souls as I would. But alas! I cannot make right work of his ways; I neither spell nor read my Lord's providence aright; my thoughts go a way that I fear they meet not God; for it is likely, that God will not come the way of my thoughts: and I cannot be taught to crucify to him my wisdom and desires, and to make him king over my thoughts; for I would have a princedom over my thoughts, and would boldly and blindly prescribe to God, and guide myself in a way of my own making:—but I hold my peace here; let him do his will.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweetest Lord, and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CXCIX.

TO CARSLUTH.

Much honored Sir,—I long to hear how your soul prospereth. I earnestly desire you, to try how matters stand between your soul and the Lord. Think it no easy matter to take Heaven by violence. Salvation cometh now to the most part of men in a night-dream. There is no scarcity of faith now, such as it is; for ye shall not now light upon the man, who will not say he hath faith in Christ;—but, alas! dreams make no man's rights.

Worthy sir, I beseech you in the Lord, to give your soul no rest, till ye have real assurance, and Christ's rights confirmed and sealed to your soul. The common faith, and country-holiness, and week-day zeal, that is among people, will never bring men to Heaven. Take pains for your salvation; for in that day, when ye shall see many men's labors and conquests[3] and idol-riches

[1] Oh, that. [2] Unite. An allusion to the uniting of mortar with stones in a wall.
[3] Acquisitions.

lying in ashes, when the earth and all the works thereof shall be burnt with fire, oh, how dear a price would your soul give for God's favor in Christ! It is a blessed thing to see Christ with up-sun, and to read over your papers and soul-accounts with fair day-light. It will not be time to cry for a lamp, when the Bridegroom is entered into his chamber, and the door shut. Fy, fy upon blinded and debased souls who are committing whoredom with this idol-clay, and hunting a poor, wretched, hungry heaven, a hungry breakfast, a day's meat from this hungry world, with the forfeiting of God's favor, and the drinking over of their heaven over the board[1] (as men used to speak,) for the laughter and sports of this short forenoon! All that is under this vault of Heaven, and betwixt us and death, and on this side of sun and moon, are but toys, night-visions, head-fancies, poor shadows, watery froth, godless vanities, at their best, and black hearts, and salt and sour miseries, sugared over, and confected with an hour's laughter or two, and the conceit of riches, honor, vain, vain court, and lawless pleasures. Sir, if ye look both to the laughing side, and to the weeping side of this world, and if ye look not only upon the skin and color of things, but into their inwards, and the heart of their excellency, ye shall see that one look of Christ's sweet and lovely eye, one kiss of his fairest face, is worth ten thousand worlds of such rotten stuff, as the foolish sons of men set their hearts upon. Oh, sir, turn, turn your heart to the other side of things, and get it once free of these entanglements, to consider eternity, death, the clay bed, the grave, awsome[2] judgment, everlasting burning quick in Hell, where death would give as great a price, (if there were a market, wherein death might be bought and sold,) as all the world. Consider Heaven and glory: —but, alas, why speak I of considering those things, which have not entered into the heart of man to consider? Look into those depths (without a bottom) of loveliness, sweetness, beauty, excellency, glory, goodness, grace, and mercy, that are in Christ; and ye shall then cry down the whole world, and all the glory of it, even when it is come to the summer-bloom; and ye shall cry, "Up with Christ, up with Christ's Father, up with eternity of glory." Sir, there is a great deal less sand in your glass than when I saw you, and your afternoon is nearer even-tide now than it was. As a flood carried back to the sea, so doth the Lord's swift post, time, carry you and your life, with wings, to the grave. Ye eat and drink, but time standeth not still; ye laugh, but your day fleeth away; ye sleep, but your hours are reckoned and put by hand.[3] Oh, how soon will time shut you out of the poor, and cold, and hungry inn of this life! and then what will yesterday's short-born pleasures do to you, but be as a snow-ball melted away, many years since, or worse? for the memory of these pleasures useth to fill the soul with bitterness. Time and experience will

[1] *To drink anything over the board.* formally to renounce it, as a seller formerly did when he drank to the purchaser on delivery to him of the goods sold, and wished him luck in the purchase. [2] Awful. [3] Laid aside, as finished.

prove this to be true; and dying men, if they could speak, would make this good. Lay no more on the creatures than they are able to carry. Lay your soul and your weights upon God. Make him your only, only best-beloved. Your errand to this life is to make sure an eternity of glory to your soul, and to match your soul with Christ. Your love, if it were more than all the love of angels in one, is Christ's due: other things worthy in themselves, in respect of Christ, are not worth a windlestraw,[1] or a drink of cold water. I doubt not but in death ye shall see all things more distinctly, and that then the world shall bear no more bulk than it is worth, and that then it shall couch and be contracted into nothing; and ye shall see Christ longer, higher, broader, and deeper than ever he was. Oh blessed conquest,[2] to lose all things, and to gain Christ! I know not what ye have, if ye want Christ! Alas! how poor is your gain, if the earth were all yours in free heritage, holding it of no man of clay, if Christ be not yours! Oh, seek all midses,[3] lay all oars in the water, put forth all your power, and bend all your endeavors, to put away and part with all things, that ye may gain and enjoy Christ. Try and search his word, and strive to go a step above and beyond ordinary professors, and resolve to sweat more and run faster than they do for salvation. Men's mid-day, cold and wise courses in godliness, and their neighbor-like, cold and wise pace to Heaven, will cause many a man to want his lodging at night, and to lie in the fields. I recommend Christ and his love to your seeking; and yourself to the tender mercy and rich grace of our Lord.

Remember my love in Christ to your wife. I desire her to learn to make her soul's anchor fast upon Christ himself. Few are saved. Let her consider what joy the smiles of God in Christ will be, and what the love-kisses of sweet, sweet Jesus, and a welcome home to the new Jerusalem, from Christ's own mouth, will be to her soul, when Christ will fold together the clay tent of her body, and lay it by his hand[4] for a time, till the fair morning of the General Resurrection. I avouch before God, man, and angel, that I have not seen, nor can imagine a lover to be comparable to lovely Jesus; I would not exchange or niffer[5] him with ten heavens. If Heaven could be without him, what could we do there? Grace, grace be with you.

Your soul's eternal well-wisher, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CC.

TO CASSINCARRIE.

Much honored Sir,—Grace, mercy and peace be to you.—I have been too long in writing to you. I am confident that ye

[1] A rush. A *windlestraw* is a withered stalk of crested dog's-tail grass. [2] Acquisition [3] Means. [4] Lay it aside, as having served its purpose. [5] Barter.

have learned to prize Christ, and his love and favor, more than ordinary professors, who scarce see Christ with half an eye, because their sight is taken up with eying and liking the beauty of this over-gilded world, that promiseth fair to all its lovers, but in the push of a trial, when need is, can give nothing but a fair beguile.

I know that ye are not ignorant, that men come not to this world, as some do to a market, to see and to be seen; or as some come, to behold a May-game, and only to behold, and to go home again. Ye came hither to treat with God, and to tryste[1] with him in his Christ, for salvation to your soul, and to seek reconciliation with an angry, wrathful God, in a covenant of peace made to you in Christ; and this is more than ordinary sport, or the play, that the greatest part of the world give their heart unto. And, therefore, worthy sir, I pray you by the salvation of your soul, and by the mercy of God, and your compearance[2] before Christ, do this in sad earnest,[3] and let not salvation be your by-work,[4] or your holy-day's task only, or a work by the way, for men think that this may be done in three days' space on a feather bed, when death and they are fallen in hands together, and that with a word or two they shall make their soul-matters right. Alas! this is to sit loose and unsure in the matters of our salvation. Nay, the seeking of this world, and of the glory of it, is but an odd and by-errand that we may slip, so being we make salvation sure. Oh, when will men learn to be that[5] heavenly-wise as to divorce from, and free their soul of all idol-lovers, and make Christ the only, only One, and trim and make ready their lamps, while they have time and day! How soon will this house skail,[6] and the inn where the poor soul lodgeth fall to the earth! How soon will some few years pass away, and then, when the day is ended, and this life's lease expired, what have men of world's glory, but dreams and thoughts? Oh, how blessed a thing is it to labor for Christ, and to make him sure! Know and try in time your holding of him, and the rights[7] and charters of Heaven, and upon what terms ye have Christ and the Gospel, and what Christ is worth in your estimation, and how lightly ye esteem other things, and how highly Christ! I am sure, that if ye see him in his beauty and glory, ye shall see him to be all things, and that incomparable jewel of gold that ye should seek, howbeit that ye should sell, wadset,[8] and forfeit your few years' portion of this life's joys. Oh, happy soul for evermore, who can rightly compare this life with that long-lasting life to come, and can balance the weighty glory of the one, with the light golden vanity of the other! The day of the Lord is now near-hand,[9] and all men shall come out in their blacks and whites, as they are: there shall be no borrowed lying colors in that day, when Christ shall be called Christ, and no longer nicknamed. Now men borrow Christ

[1] Engage. [2] Appearance. [3] Sober earnest.
[4] Occasional work, after the stated work is finished. [5] So.
[6] Disperse. [7] Title-deeds. [8] Alienate. [9] Near.

and his white color, and the lustre, and farding[1] of Christianity; but how many counterfeit masks will be burnt in the day of God, in the fire, that shall burn the earth and the works that are on it? And howbeit Christ have the hardest part of it now, yet in the presence of my Lord, whom I serve in the spirit, I would not niffer[2] or exchange Christ's prison, bonds, and chains, with the gold chains and lordly rents, and smiling and happy-like[3] heavens of the men of this world. I am far from thoughts of repenting, because of my losses and bonds for Christ. I wish that all my adversaries were as I am, except my bonds. Worthy, worthy, worthy for evermore, is Christ, for whom we should suffer pains like Hell's pains; far more the short hell that the saints of God have in this life. Sir, I wish that your soul may be more acquainted with the sweetness of Christ.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his only Lord and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCI.

TO THE LADY CARDONESS.

Mistress,—I beseech you in the Lord Jesus, to make every day more and more of Christ; and try your growth in the grace of God, and what new ground ye win daily on[4] corruption: for travellers are day by day either advancing farther on, and nearer home, or else they go not right about to compass their journey.

I think still the better and better of Christ: alas! I know not where to set him, I would so fain have him high! I cannot set heavens above heavens, till I were tired with numbering, and set him upon the highest step and story of the highest of them all; but I wish I could make him great through the world, suppose my loss, and pain, and shame were set under the soles of his feet, that he might stand upon me.

I request that you faint not, because this world and ye are at yea and nay, and because this is not a home that laugheth upon you. The wise Lord, who knoweth you, will have it so, because he casteth a net for your love, to catch it and gather it in to himself: therefore, bear patiently the loss of children, and burdens, and other discontentments, either within or without the house:—your Lord in them is seeking you, and seek ye him. Let none be your love and choice, and the flower of your delights, but your Lord Jesus. Set not your heart upon the world, since God hath not made it your portion; for it will not fall to you to get two portions, and to rejoice twice, and to be happy twice, and to have an upper heaven, and an under heaven too. Christ our Lord, and his saints were not so; and, therefore, let go your grip[5] of this

[1] Decoration. [2] Barter. [3] Apparently happy.
[4] How fast you are gaining on. [5] Hold.

life, and of the good things of it: I hope that your heaven groweth not hereaway.[1] Learn daily both to possess and miss Christ, in his secret bridegroom-smiles. He must go and come, because his infinite wisdom thinketh it best for you. We shall be together one day. We shall not need to borrow light from sun, moon, or candle. There shall be no complaints on either side in Heaven. There shall be none there, but he and we, the Bridegroom and the Bride; devils, temptations, trials, desertions, losses, sad hearts, pain, and death, shall be all put out of play; and the Devil must give up his office of tempting. Oh, blessed is the soul, whose hope hath a face looking straight out to that day! It is not our part to make a treasure here; anything, under the covering of Heaven, which we can build upon, is but ill ground and a sandy foundation. Every good thing, except God, wanteth a bottom, and cannot stand its lone;[2] how then can it bear the weight of us? Let us not lay a load on a windlestraw;[3] there shall nothing find[4] my weight, or found my happiness, but God. I know that all created power would sink under me, if I should lean down upon it; and, therefore, it is better to rest on God, than to sink or fall; and we weak souls must have a bottom and a being-place,[5] for we cannot stand our lone;[6] let us then be wise in our choice, and choose and wale[7] our own blessedness, which is to trust in the Lord. Each one of us hath a whore and idol, besides our Husband, Christ: but it is our folly to divide our narrow and little love; it will not serve two. It is best then to hold its whole and together, and to give it to Christ; for then we get double interest for our love, when we lend it to, and lay it out upon Christ; and we are sure besides, that the stock cannot perish.

Now I can say no more. Remember me. I have God's right to that people; howbeit by the violence of men, stronger than I, I am banished from you, and chased away. The Lord give you mercy in the day of Christ. It may be that God will clear my sky again; howbeit there is small appearance of my deliverance: but let him do with me what seemeth good in his own eyes. I am his clay, let my Potter frame and fashion me as he pleaseth. Grace be with you.

Your lawful, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCII.

TO SIBYLLA MACADAM.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I can bear witness in my bonds, that Christ is still the longer the better, and no worse, yea, inconceivably better than he is or can be called.

[1] In this present state.
[2] By itself alone.
[3] A withered stalk of grass.
[4] Feel.
[5] Place of existence.
[6] By ourselves alone.
[7] Carefully select.

I think it half a heaven, to have my fill of the smell of his sweet breath, and to sleep in the arms of Christ my Lord, with his left hand under my head, and his right hand embracing me. There is no great reckoning to be made of the withering of my flower, in comparison of the foul and manifest wrongs done to Christ; nay, let never the dew of God lye upon my branches again, let the bloom[1] fall from my joy, and let it wither, let the Almighty blow out my candle, so being the Lord might be great among Jews and Gentiles, and his oppressed Church delivered. Let Christ fare well, suppose I should eat ashes. I know that he must be sweet himself, when his cross is so sweet. And it is the part of us all, if we marry himself, to marry the crosses, losses, and reproaches, also, that follow him; for mercy followeth Christ's cross. His prison for beauty is made of marble and ivory; his chains, that are laid on his prisoners, are golden chains; and the sighs of the prisoners of hope are perfumed with comforts, the like whereof cannot be bred or found on this side of sun and moon. Follow on after his love; tire not of Christ, but come in, and see his beauty and excellency, and feed your soul upon Christ's sweetness. This world is not yours, neither would I have your heaven made of such metal as mire and clay. Ye have the choice and wale[2] of all lovers in Heaven or out of Heaven, when ye have Christ, the only delight of God his Father. Climb up the mountain with joy, and faint not; for time will cut off the men who pursue Christ's followers. Our best things here have a worm in them; our joys besides God, in the inner half, are but woes and sorrows:—Christ, Christ is that which our love and desires can sleep sweetly and rest safely upon.

Now the very God of peace establish you in Christ. Help a prisoner with your prayers, and entreat that our Lord would be pleased to visit me with a sight of his beauty in his house, as he has sometimes done. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCIII.

TO THE LAIRD OF CALLY.

Worthy Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I have been too long, I confess, in writing to you. My suit now to you in paper, since I have no access to speak to you, as formerly, is, that ye would lay the foundation sure in your youth. When ye begin to seek Christ, try, I pray you, upon what terms ye covenant to follow him, and lay your accounts what it may cost you; that neither summer nor winter, nor well nor wo, may cause you change your Master, Christ. Keep fair to him, and be honest and

[1] Blossom.

[2] The very best choice that can be made.

faithful, that he find not a crack in you. Surely ye are now in the throng of temptations. When youth is come to its fairest bloom, then the Devil, and the lusts of a deceiving world, and sin are upon horseback, and follow with up-sails. If this were not so, Paul needed not to have written to a sanctified and holy youth, Timothy, (a faithful preacher of the Gospel,) to flee the lusts of youth. Give Christ your virgin love; you cannot put your love and heart into a better hand. Oh! if ye knew him, and saw his beauty,—your love, your heart, your desires would close with him, and cleave to him. Love, by nature, when it seeth, cannot but cast out its spirit and strength upon amiable objects, and good things, and things love-worthy;—and what fairer thing than Christ? O fair sun, and fair moon, and fair stars, and fair flowers, and fair roses, and fair lilies, and fair creatures; but O ten thousand thousand times fairer Lord Jesus! Alas, I wronged him in making the comparison this way! O black sun and moon, but O fair Lord Jesus! O black flowers, and black lilies and roses, but O fair, fair, ever fair Lord Jesus! O all fair things, black and deformed without beauty, when ye are beside that fairest Lord, Jesus! O black Heaven, but O fair Christ! O black angels, but surpassingly fair Lord Jesus! I would seek no more to make me happy for evermore, but a thorough and clear sight of the beauty of Jesus, my Lord. Let my eyes enjoy his fairness, and stare him forever in the face, and I have all that can be wished. Get Christ rather than gold or silver; seek Christ, howbeit ye should lose all things for him.

They take their marks by the moon,[1] and look asquint, in looking to fair Christ, who resolve for the world and their ease, and for their honor, and court, and credit, or for fear of losses and a sore skin, to turn their backs upon Christ and his truth, Alas, how many blind eyes and squint lookers look this day in Scotland upon Christ's beauty, and they see a spot in Christ's fair face! Alas, they are not worthy of Christ, who look this way upon him, and see no beauty in him why they should desire him! God send me my fill of his beauty, if it be possible that my soul can be full of his beauty here: but much of Christ's beauty needeth not abate the eager appetite of a soul, (sick of love for himself,) to see him in the other world, where he is seen as he is.

I am glad, with all my heart, that ye have given your greenest morning-age to this Lord Jesus. Hold on, and weary not; faint not, resolve upon suffering for Christ; but fear not ten days' tribulation, for Christ's sour cross is sugared with comforts, and hath a taste of Christ himself. I esteem it to be my glory, my joy, and my crown, and I bless him for this honor, to be yoked with Christ, and married to Him, in suffering, who, therefore, was born, and, therefore, came into the world, that he might bear witness to the Truth. Take pains, above all things, for salvation; for without running, fighting, sweating, wrestling, Heaven is not taken. Oh, happy soul, that crosseth nature's stomach, and delighteth to gain

[1] *To take one's marks by the moon*, to be changeable.

that fair garland and crown of glory! What a feckless[1] loss is it for you, to go through this wilderness, and never taste sin's sugared pleasures! What poorer is a soul to want pride, lust, love of the world, and the vanities of this vain and worthless world? Nature hath no cause to weep at the want of such toys as these. Esteem it your gain to be an heir of glory. Oh, but that is an eye-look to a fair rent! The very hope of Heaven, under troubles, is like wind and sails to the soul, and like wings, when the feet come out of the snare. Oh, for what stay we here? Up, up, after our Lord Jesus! This is not our rest, nor our dwelling. What have we to do in this prison except only to take meat and house-room in it for a time?

Grace, grace be with you.

Your soul's well-wisher, and Christ's prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCIV.

TO WILLIAM GORDON, AT KENMURE.

DEAR BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I have been long in answering your letter, which came in good time to me. It is my aim and hearty desire, that my furnace, which is of the Lord's kindling, may sparkle[2] fire upon standers-by, to the warming of their hearts with God's love. The very dust that falleth from Christ's feet, his old ragged clothes, his knotty and black cross, are sweeter to me than kings' golden crowns, and their time-eaten pleasures. I should be a liar and false witness, if I would not give my Lord Jesus a fair testimonial[3] with my whole soul. My word, I know, will not heighten him: he needeth not such props under his feet, to raise his glory high: but, oh, that I could raise him the height of Heaven, and the breadth and length of ten heavens, in the estimation of all his young lovers! for we have all shapen Christ but too narrow and too short, and formed conceptions of his love in our conceit, very unworthy of it. Oh, that men were taken and catched with his beauty and fairness! they would give over playing with idols, in which there is not half room for the love of one soul to expatiate itself; and man's love is but heart-hungered in gnawing upon bare bones, and sucking at dry breasts. It is well wared[4] they want who will not come to Him who hath a world of love, and goodness, and bounty for all. We seek to thaw our frozen hearts at the cold smoke of the short-timed creature, and our souls gather neither heat nor life, nor light; for these cannot give to us what they have not in themselves. Oh, that we could thrust in through these thorns, and this throng of bastard-lovers, and be ravished and sick of love for Christ! We should find some footing, and some room, and sweet ease for our tottering and thoughtless souls

[1] Trifling. [2] Emit sparks of. [3] Certificate. [4] Well-merited.

in our Lord. I wish it were in my power, after this day, to cry down all love but the love of Christ, and to cry down all gods but Christ, all saviours but Christ, all well-beloveds but Christ, and all soul-suitors, all love-beggars but Christ.

Ye complain, that ye want a mark of the sound work of grace and love in your soul. For answer, consider for your satisfaction (till God send more) 1 John iii. 14. And as your complaint of deadness and doubtings, Christ will, I hope, take your deadness and you together. They are bodies full of holes, running boils, and broken bones which need mending, that Christ the physician taketh up: whole vessels are not for the Mediator Christ's art; publicans, sinners, whores, harlots, are ready market-wares for Christ. The only thing that will bring sinners within a cast of Christ's drawing arm, is, that which ye write of, some feeling of death and sin, that bringeth forth complaints; and, therefore, out of sense complain more and be more acquaint[1] with all the cramps, stitches, and soul-swoonings that trouble you. The more pain and the more night-watching, and the moe fevers, the better. A soul bleeding to death, till Christ were sent for, and cried for in all haste, to come and stem the blood, and close up the hole in the wound, with his own hand and balm, were a very good disease, when many are dying of a whole heart. We have all too little of hell-pain and terrors that way: nay, God send me such a hell, as Christ hath promised to make a heaven of. Alas, I am not come that[2] far on in the way, as to say in sad earnest,[3] "Lord Jesus, great and sovereign physician, here is a pained patient for thee." But the thing that we mistake is the want of victory. We hold that to be the mark of one that hath no grace: nay, say I, the want of fighting were a mark of no grace; but I shall not say the want of victory is such a mark. If my fire and the Devil's water make crackling like thunder in the air, I am the less feared; for where there is fire, it is Christ's part, which I lay and bind upon him, to keep in the coal, and to pray the Father that my faith fail not, if I in the mean time be wrestling, and doing, and fighting, and mourning: for prayer putteth not Paul's devil—the thorn in the flesh, and the messenger of Satan—to the door at first; but our Lord will have them to try every one, and let Paul fend for[4] himself, by God's help, God keeping the stakes, and moderating the play. And ye do well not to doubt, if the ground-stone[5] be sure, but to try if it be so: for there is great odds between doubting that we have grace, and trying if we have grace; —the former may be sin, but the latter is good. We are but loose in trying our free-holding of Christ, and making sure work of Christ. Holy fear is a searching of the camp, that there be no enemy within our bosom to betray us, and a seeing that all be fast and sure: for I see many leaky vessels fair before the wind, and professors who take their conversion upon trust, and they go on securely, and see not the under-water,[6] till a storm sink them.

[1] Acquainted. [2] So. [3] Sober earnest.
[4] Shift for. [5] Foundation. [6] Bilge-water.

Each man had need twice a day, and oftener, to be riped[1] and searched with candles.

Pray for me, that the Lord would give me house-room again, to hold a candle to this dark world.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCV.

TO MARGARET FULLERTON.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am glad that ever ye did cast your love on Christ: fasten more and more love every day on him. Oh, if[2] I had a river of love, a sea of love, that would never go dry, to bestow upon him! But alas, the pity! Christ hath beauty for me, but I have not love for him. Oh, what pain is it, to see Christ in his beauty, and then to want a heart and love for him! but I see, that want we must, till Christ lend us, never to be paid again. Oh, that he would empty these vaults, and lower houses, of these poor souls, of these bastard and base lovers, which we follow! and verily, I see no object in heaven or in earth, that I could ware[3] this much of love upon, that I have upon Christ. Alas! that clay, and time, and shadows run away with our love, which is ill spent upon any but upon Christ. Each fool at the day of judgment will seek back his love from the creatures, when he shall see them all in a fair fire; but they shall prove irresponsal[4] debtors: and, therefore, it is best here, that we look ere we leap, and look ere we love.

I find now under his cross, that I would fain give him more than I have to give him, if giving were in my power: but I rather wish him my heart than give him it:—except he take it, and put himself in possession of it, (for I hope he hath a market-right to me, since he hath ransomed me,) I see not how Christ can have me. Oh, that he would be pleased to be more homely[5] with my soul's love, and to come in to my soul, and take his own! but when he goeth away and hideth himself, all is to me that I had of Christ, as if it had fallen into the sea-bottom. Oh, that I should be so fickle in my love, as to love him only by the eyes and the nose! that is, to love him only in as far as fond and foolish sense carrieth me, and no more:—and when I see not, and smell not, and touch not, then I have all to seek. I cannot love perqueer[6] nor rejoice perqueer:[6] but this is our weakness, till we be at home, and shall have aged men's stomachs to bear Christ's love.

[1] Thoroughly examined, as it were by turning him inside out, as is done to a person's pockets when they are searched for stolen goods. [2] Oh, that.
[3] Expend. [4] Irresponsible. [5] Familiar. [6] Perfectly, exactly.

Pray for me, that our Lord would bring me back to you, with a new blessing of the Gospel of Christ. I forget not you.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCVI.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY LADY VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

My very noble and dear Lady,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—The Lord hath brought me safely to Aberdeen. I have gotten lodging in the hearts of all I meet with. No face that hath not smiled upon me; only the indwellers of this town are dry, cold, and general. They consist of Papists, and men of Gallio's metal, firm in no religion; and it is counted no wisdom here to countenance a confined and silenced minister; but the shame of Christ's cross shall not be my shame. Queensberry's attempt seemeth to sleep, because the Bishop of Galloway was pleased to say to the Treasurer that I had committed treason; which word blunted the Treasurer's borrowed zeal. So I thank God, who will not have me to anchor my soul upon false ground, or upon flesh and blood; it is better it be fastened within the veil. I find my old challenges [1] reviving again, and my love often jealous [2] of Christ's love, when I look upon my own guiltiness. And I verily think that the world hath too soft an opinion of the gate [3] to Heaven, and that many shall get a blind and sad beguile [4] for Heaven; for there is more ado than a cold and frozen "Lord, Lord." It must be a way narrower and straiter than we conceive, for the righteous shall scarcely be saved. It were good to take a more judicious view of Christianity; for I have been doubting, if ever I knew any more of Christianity than the letters of the name. I will not lie on my Lord. I find often much joy, and unspeakable comfort, in His sweet presence, who sent me hither; and I trust, this house of my pilgrimage shall be my palace, my garden of delights; and that Christ will be kind to poor sold Joseph, who is separated from his brethren. I would be sometimes too hot, and too joyful, if the heart breaks at the remembrance of sin, and fair, fair feast-days with King Jesus, did not cool me, and sour my sweet joys. Oh! how sweet is the love of Christ! and how wise is that love! But let faith frist [5] and trust a while; it is no reason sons should take offence, that the father giveth them not twice a year hire, as he doth to hired servants: better that God's heirs live upon hope, than upon hire.

Madam, your Ladyship knoweth what Christ hath done, to have all your love; and that he alloweth not his love upon your

[1] Self-accusations. [2] Suspicious. [3] Way.
[4] Beguilement. [5] Postpone.

dear child.[1] Keep good quarters with Christ in your love. I verily think that Christ hath said, I must needs-force[2] have Jean Campbell for myself: and he hath laid many oars in the water, to fish and hunt home-over[3] your heart to Heaven: let him have his prey; he will think you well won, when he hath gotten you. It is good to have recourse often, and to have the door open to our strong-hold; for the sword of the Lord, the sword of the Lord, is for Scotland; and yet two or three berries shall be left in the top of the olive-tree.

If a word can do my brother good in his distress, I know your Ladyship will be willing and ready to speak it, and more also. Now the only wise God, and your only, only One, He who dwelt in the bush, be with you.

I write many kisses and many blessings in Christ to your dear child: the blessings of his father's God, the blessings due to the fatherless and the widow, be yours and his.

Your Ladyship's, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen.

POSTSCRIPT.

Madam, be pleased, at a fit time, to try my Lord of Lorn's mind, if his Lordship would be pleased, that I dedicate another work against the Arminians to his honorable name. For howbeit I would compare no patron to his Lordship, and though I have sufficient experience of his love, yet it is possible that his Lordship may think it not expedient at this time; but I expect your Ladyship's answer, and I hope that your Ladyship will be plain.

LETTER CCVII.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY LADY VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Ladyship.—I long to hear from you, and that dear child; and for that cause I trouble you with letters.

I am for the present thinking the sparrows and the swallows, that build their nests in Anwoth, blessed birds. The Lord hath made all my congregation desolate. Alas, I am oft at this, "Show me wherefore thou contendest with me." O earth, earth, cover not the violence done to me. I know it is my faithless jealousy in this my dark night, to take a friend for a foe; yet hath not my Lord made any plea[4] with me. I chide with him, but he giveth me fair words. Seeing my sins and the sins of my youth deserved strokes, how am I obliged to my Lord, who amongst many

[1] He alloweth not the love which is his due to be given to the child.
[2] Of necessity. [3] Homewards. [4] Controversy.

crosses, hath given me a waled[1] and chosen cross, to suffer for the name of my Lord Jesus! Since I must have chains, he would put golden chains on me, watered[2] over with many consolations; seeing I must have sorrow, (for I have sinned, O Preserver of mankind!) he hath waled[1] out for me joyful sorrow,—honest, spiritual, and glorious sorrow. My crosses come through mercy and love's fingers, from the kind heart of a brother, Christ my Lord; and, therefore, they must be sweet and sugared. Oh what am I! such a lump, such a rotten mass of sin, to be counted a bairn worthy to be nurtured,[3] and stricken with the best and most honorable rod in my Father's house, the golden rod, wherewith my eldest brother, the Lord, heir of the inheritance, and his faithful witnesses, were stricken withal!

It would be thought that I should be thankful and rejoice: but my beholders and lovers in Christ have eyes of flesh, and have made my one to be ten, and I am somebody in their books. My witness is above, that there are armies of thoughts within me saying the contrary, and laughing at their wide mistake. If my inner side were seen, my corruption would appear; I would lose and forfeit love and respect at the hands of any that love God; pity would come in the place of these. Oh, if[4] they would yet see me lower, and my well-beloved Christ higher! I would I had grace and strength of my Lord, to be joyful and contentedly glad and cheerful, that God's glory might ride, and openly triumph before the view of men, angels, devils, earth, Heaven, Hell, sun, moon, and all God's creatures, upon my pain and sufferings,—providing always, that I felt not the Lord's hatred and displeasure.

But I fear that his fair glory be but soiled in coming through such a foul creature as I am. If I could be the sinless matter of glorifying Christ, howbeit to my loss, pain, sufferings, and extremity of wretchedness, how would my soul rejoice? But I am far from this. He knoweth, that his love hath made me a prisoner, and bound me hand and foot; but it is my pain, that I cannot win[5] loose, nor get loose hands, and a loosed heart, to do service to my Lord Jesus, and to speak his love. I confess that I have neither tongue nor pen to do it. Christ's love is more than my praises, and above the thoughts of the angel Gabriel, and all the mighty hosts that stand before the throne of God. I think shame,[6] I am sad and cast down, to think, that my foul tongue, and my polluted heart, should come in to help others to sing aloud the praises of the love of Christ: all I dow[7] do, is to wish the choir to grow throng,[8] and to grow in the extolling of Christ. Wo, wo is me, for my guiltiness seen to few! My hidden wounds, still bleeding within me, are before the eyes of no man; but if my sweetest Lord Jesus were not still bathing, washing, balming, healing, and binding them up, they should rot, and break out to my shame.

I know not what will be the end of my suffering. I have seen but the one side of my cross; what will be the other side, He

[1] Selected. [2] Plated. [3] Subjected to discipline. [4] Oh, that.
[5] Get. [6] Am ashamed. [7] Am able. [8] Crowded.

knoweth, who hath his fire in Zion. Let him lead me, if it were through Hell. I thank my Lord, that my on-waiting and holding my peace as I do, to see what more Christ will do to me, is my joy. Oh, if[1] my ease, joy, pleasure for evermore, were laid in wadset[2] and in pledge, to buy praises to Christ! But I am far from this. It is easy for a poor soul, in the deep debt of Christ's love, to spit farther than he dow[3] leap or jump, and to feed upon broad wishes that Christ may be honored—but in performance I am stark nought. I have nothing, nothing to give Christ but poverty: except he would comprise[4] and arrest my soul, and my love, (oh, oh, if[1] he would do that!) I have nothing for him. He may indeed seize upon a dyvour's[5] person, soul and body; but he hath no goods for Christ to meddle with: but how glad would my soul be, if he would forfeit my love,[6] and never give it me again.

Madam, I would be glad to hear that Christ's claim to you were still the more, and that you were still going forward, and that you were nearer him. I dow not[7] honor Christ myself, but I wish all others to make sail to Christ's house. I would I could invite you to go into your well-beloved's house-of-wine, and that upon my word,—you would then see a new mystery of love in Christ that you never saw before.

I am somewhat encouraged in that your Ladyship is not dry and cold to Christ's prisoner, as some are. I hope it is put up in my Master's count-book. I am not much grieved, that my jealous husband break in pieces my idols, that either they dare not, or will not do for me. My master needeth not their help, but they had need to be that serviceable as to help him. Madam, I have been that bold as to put you and that sweet child into the prayers of Mr. Andrew Cant, Mr. James Martin, the Lady Leyes, and some others in this country that truly love Christ. Be pleased to let me hear how the child is. The blessings that came upon the head of Joseph, and on the top of the head of him who was separated from his brethren, and the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush, be seen upon him and you. Madam, I can say, by some little experience, more now than before of Christ to you. I am still upon this, that if you seek, there is a pose,[8] a hidden treasure, and a gold mine in Christ, you never yet saw. Then come and see.

Thus recommending you to God's dearest mercy, I rest,

Your own, in his sweet Lord Jesus, at all obedience,

S. R.

My Lady Marischall is very kind to me, and her son also.

Aberdeen, June 17, 1637.

[1] Oh, that.
[2] Alienated.
[3] That is, to profess more than he is able to do.
[4] Attach.
[5] Debtor's.
[6] Seize upon my love as a forfeiture to himself.
[7] Am not able.
[8] Hoard.

LETTER CCVIII.

TO JOHN HENDERSON, IN RUSCO.

Loving Friend,—I earnestly desire your salvation.—Know the Lord, and seek Christ. You have a soul that cannot die; see for a lodging for your poor soul; for that house of clay will fall—Heaven or nothing, either Christ or nothing. Use prayer in your house, and set your thoughts often upon death and judgment. It is dangerous to be loose in the matter of your salvation. Few are saved; men go to Heaven in ones and twos, and the whole world lieth in sin. Love your enemies, and stand by the truth which I have taught you, in all things. Fear not men, but let God be your fear. Your time will not be long; make the seeking of Christ your daily task; ye may, when ye are in the fields, speak to God. Seek a broken heart for sin; for without that there is no meeting with Christ. I speak this to your wife, as well as to yourself. I desire your sister, in her fears and doubtings, to fasten her grips[1] on Christ's love: I forbid her to doubt, for Christ loveth her, and hath her name written in his book; her salvation is fast coming;—Christ, her Lord, is not slow in coming, nor slack in his promise.

Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CCIX.

TO MR. ALEXANDER COLVILLE, OF BLAIR.

Much honored Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I would desire to know how my Lord took my letter, which I sent him, and how he is. I desire nothing, but that he may be fast and honest to my royal Master and King.

I am well every way, all praise to Him in whose books I must stand forever as his debtor!—only my silence paineth me. I had one joy out of Heaven, next to Christ my Lord, and that was to preach him to this faithless generation; and they have taken that from me; it was to me as the poor man's one eye, and they have put out that eye. I know that the violence done to me, and his poor bereft bride, is come up before the Lord; and, suppose that I see not the other side of my cross, or what my Lord will bring out of it, yet I believe that the vision shall not tarry, and that Christ is on his journey for my deliverance: he goeth not slowly, but passeth over ten mountains at one stride; in the mean time, I am pained with his love, because I want real possession. When

[1] Grasp.

Christ cometh, he stayeth not long; but certainly, the blowing of his breath upon a poor soul is heaven upon earth; and when the wind turneth into the North, and he goeth away, I die, till the wind change into the West, and he visit his prisoner. But he holdeth me not often at his door. I am richly repaid for suffering for him. Oh, if[1] all Scotland were as I am, except my bonds! Oh, what pain I have, because I cannot get him praised by my sufferings! Oh, that Heaven, within and without, and the earth were paper, and all the rivers, fountains, and seas were ink, and I able to write all the paper within and without, full of his praises, and love and excellency, to be read by man and angel! Nay, this is little;. I owe my heaven to Christ; and to desire, howbeit I should never enter in at the gates of the New Jerusalem, to send my love and my praises over the wall to Christ. Alas, that time and days lye betwixt him and me, and adjourn our meeting! It is my part to cry, "Oh, when will the night be past and the day dawn, that we shall see one another!"

Be pleased to remember my service to my Lord, to whom I wrote; and show him that, for his affection to me, I cannot but pray for him, and earnestly desire that Christ miss him not out of the roll of those who are his witnesses, now when his kingly honor is called in question. It is his honor to hold up Christ's royal train, and to be an instrument to hold the crown upon Christ's head. Show him, because I love his true honor and standing, that this is my earnest desire for him.

Now I bless you; and the prayers of Christ's prisoner come upon you; and His sweetest presence whom ye serve in the Spirit, accompany you.

Yours, at all obliged obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 23, 1637.

LETTER CCX.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER, MR. JOHN NEVAY.

My reverend, and dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I have exceedingly many whom I write to, else I would be kinder in paper.

I rejoice that my sweet Master hath any to back him. Thick, thick[2] may my royal King's court be. Oh, that his Kingdom might grow! It were my joy to have his house full of guests.

Except that I have some cloudy days, for the most part I have a king's life with Christ. He is all perfumed with the powders of the merchant: he hath a king's face, and a king's smell: his chariot, wherein he carrieth his poor prisoner, is of the wood of Lebanon, it is paved with love. Is not that soft ground to walk or lye on? I think better of Christ than ever I did: my thoughts

[1] Oh, that. [2] Thronged, thronged.

of his love grow and swell on me. I never write to any of him, so much as I have felt. Oh, if [1] I could write a book of Christ, and of his love! Suppose I were made white ashes, and burnt for this same truth, that men count but as knots of straw, it were my gain, if my ashes could proclaim the worth, excellency, and love of my Lord Jesus. There is much telling of Christ: I give over the weighing of him; Heaven would not be the beam of a balance to weigh him in. What eyes be on me, or what wind of tongues be on me, I care not: let me stand in this stage in the fool's coat, and act a fool's part to the rest of this nation; if I can set my Well-beloved on high, and witness fair for him, a fig for their hosanna. If I can roll myself in a lap of Christ's garment, I shall lye there, and laugh at the thoughts of dying bits of clay.

Brother, we have cause to weep for our Harlot-mother; her husband is sending her to Rome's brothel-house, which is the gate [2] she liketh well. Yet I persuade you that there shall be a fair after-growth for Christ in Scotland, and that this Church shall sing the Bridegroom's welcome-home again to his own house.—The worms shall eat them first, ere they cause Christ to take good-night at Scotland. I am here assaulted with the doctor's guns, but I bless the Father of lights, that they draw not blood of truth. I find no lodging in the hearts of natural men, who are cold friends to my Master.

I pray you, remember my love to that gentleman, A. C. My heart is knit to him, because he and I have one Master. Remember my bonds, and present my service to my Lord and my Lady. I wish that Christ may be dearer to them than he is to many in their place.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 5, 1637.

LETTER CCXI.

TO MY LADY BOYD.

Madam,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Few, I believe, know the pain and torment of Christ's fristed [3] love: fristing [4] with Christ's presence is a matter of torment. I know a poor soul that would lay all oars in the water for a banquet or feast of Christ's love. I cannot think, but it must be up-taking [5] and sweet, to see the white and red of Christ's fair face; for he is white and ruddy, and the Chiefest among ten thousand, (Cant. v. 10.) I am sure, that must be a well-made face of his; Heaven must be in his visage; glory, glory for evermore must sit on his countenance. I dare not curse the mask and covering that are on his face; but

[1] Oh, that.
[2] Road.
[3] Having the possession and enjoyment postponed.
[4] Postponing possession and enjoyment.
[5] Exhilarating.

oh, if[1] there were a hole in it! Oh, if[1] God would tear the mask! Fy, fy upon us, we were never ashamed till now that we do not proclaim our pining and languishing for him. I am sure that never tongue spake of Christ as he is. I am still of that mind, and still will be, that we wrong and undervalue that holy, holy One, in having such short and shallow thoughts of his weight and worth. Oh, if[1] I could have but leave, to stand beside, and see the Father weigh Christ the Son, if it were possible! But how every one of them comprehendeth another, we, who have eyes of clay, cannot comprehend; but it is pity for evermore, and more than shame, that such an one as Christ should sit in Heaven his lone[2] for us. To go up thither once-errand[3] and on purpose to see, were no small glory. Oh, that he would strike out windows, and fair and great lights in this old house, this fallen-down soul, and then set the soul near-hand[4] Christ, that the rays and beams of light, and the soul-delighting glances of the fair, fair Godhead, might shine in at the windows, and fill the house! A fairer, and more near, and direct sight of Christ would make room for his love; for we are but pinched and straitened in his love. Alas, it were easy to measure and weigh the love that we have for Christ, by inches and ounces! Alas, that we should love by measure and weight, and not rather have floods and feasts of Christ's love! Oh, that Christ would break down the old narrow vessels of these narrow and ebb[5] souls, and make fair, deep, wide, and broad souls, to hold a sea and a full tide, flowing over all its banks of Christ's love!

Oh, that the Almighty would give me my request! that I might see Christ come to his temple again, (as he is minting,[6] and, it is like, minding to do,) and if[7] the land were humbled. The judgments threatened, are with this reservation, I know, "If ye will turn and repent." Oh, what a heaven would we have on earth, to see Scotland's moon like the light of the sun, and Scotland's sun-light seven-fold, like the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wounds! (Isa. xxx. 26.) Alas, that we will not pull and draw Christ to his old tents again, to come and feed among the lilies, till the day break, and the shadows flee away! Oh, that the nobles would go on, in the strength and courage of the Lord, to bring our lawful King, Jesus, home again! I am persuaded that he shall return again in glory to this land; but happy were they who would help to convoy[8] him to his sanctuary, and set him again up upon the Mercy-seat, betwixt the Cherubim. "O Sun, return to darkened Britain! O Fairest among all the sons of men, O most excellent One, come home again; come home and win the praises and blessings of the mourners in Zion, the prisoners of hope, that wait for thee! I know that he can also triumph in suffering, and weep and reign, and die and

1 Oh that. 2 By himself alone. 3 On the sole errand.
4 Near. 5 Shallow. 6 Intimating, by signs, an intention.
7 That. 8 Accompany on the way.

triumph, and remain in prison and yet subdue his enemies: but how happy were I to see the coronation-day of Christ; to see his Mother, who bare him, put the crown upon his head again, and cry with shouting till the earth should ring, "Let Jesus, our King, live and reign for evermore."

Grace, grace be with your Ladyship.

Your Ladyship's at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCXII.

TO WILLIAM GLENDINNING.

Dear Brother,—Ye are heartily welcome to that honor, that Christ hath made common to us both, which is to suffer for his name. Verily I think it my garland and crown; and if the Lord should ask of me my blood and life for this cause, I would gladly, in his strength, pay due debt to Christ's honor and glory, in that kind. Acquaint yourself with Christ's love, and ye shall not miss to find new golden mines and treasures in Christ; nay, truly, we but stand beside Christ, we go not in to him to take our fill of him. But, if he would do two things,—1. Draw the curtains, and make bare his holy face; and then, 2. Clear our dim and bleared eyes, to see his beauty and glory, he should find many lovers. I would seek no more happiness, than a sight of him so near-hand,[1] as to see, hear, smell, and touch, and embrace him: but oh, closed doors, and veils, and curtains, and thick clouds hold me in pain, while I find the sweet burning of his love, that many waters cannot quench! Oh, what sad hours have I, when I think, that the love of Christ scaureth[2] at me, and bloweth by me! If my Lord Jesus would come to bargaining for his love, I think he might make the price himself. I should not refuse ten thousand years in Hell, to have a wide soul enlarged and made wider, that I might be exceedingly, even to the running-over, filled with his love. Oh, what am I to love such a One, or to be loved by that high and lofty One! I think the angels may blush to look upon him; and what am I to defile such infinite brightness with my sinful eyes! Oh, that Christ would come near, and stand still, and give me leave to look upon him!—for to look seemeth the poor man's privilege, since he may, for nothing, and without hire, behold the sun. I should have a king's life, if I had no other thing to do, than, for evermore, to behold and eye my fair Lord Jesus: nay, suppose I were holden out, at Heaven's fair entry, I should be happy for evermore, to look through a hole in the door, and see my dearest and fairest Lord's face. O great King, why standest thou aloof? Why remainest thou beyond the mountains? O Well-beloved, why dost thou pain a poor soul with delays? A

[1] Near. [2] Boggleth.

long time out of thy glorious presence is two deaths and two hells to me.—We must meet, I must see him, I dow not[1] want him. Hunger and longing for Christ, hath brought on such a necessity of enjoying Christ, that, cost me what it will, I cannot but assure Christ that I will not, I dow not[1] want him: for I cannot master nor command Christ's love. Nay, Hell (as I now think,) and all the pains in it, laid on me alone, would not put me from loving: yea, suppose that my Lord Jesus would not love me, it is above my strength or power to keep back or imprison the weak love which I have, but it must be out to Christ: I would set Heaven's joy aside, and live upon Christ's love its lone.[2] Let me have no joy but the warmness and fire of Christ's love; I seek no other, God knoweth. If this love be taken from me, the bottom is fallen out of all my happiness and joy; and, therefore, I believe that Christ will never do me that[3] much harm, as to bereave a poor prisoner of his love: it were cruelty to take it from me; and He who is kindness itself, cannot be cruel.

Dear brother, weary not of my sweet Master's chains; we are so much the sibber[4] to Christ that we suffer. Lodge not a hard thought of my royal King: rejoice in his cross. Your deliverance sleepeth not. He that will come is not slack of his promise. Wait on for God's timous[5] salvation; ask not when, or how long? I hope he shall lose nothing of you in the furnace, but dross. Commit your cause in meekness, (forgiving your oppressors,) to God, and your sentence shall come back from him laughing. Our Bridegroom's day is coming fast on; and this world, that seemeth to go with a long and a short foot, shall be put into two ranks. Wait till your ten days[6] be ended, and hope for the crown; Christ will not give you a blind in the end.

Commend me to your wife and father, and to Baillie M. A.; and send this letter to him.

The prayers of Christ's prisoner be upon you, and the Lord's presence accompany you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 6, 1637.

LETTER CCXIII.

TO ROBERT LENNOX, OF DISDOVE.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I beseech you in the Lord Jesus, make fast and sure work of life eternal. Sow not rotten seed: every man's work will speak for itself, what his seed hath been. Oh, how many see I, who sow to the flesh! Alas, what a crop will that be, when the Lord shall put in his hook[7] to reap this world, that is ripe and white for judgment!

[1] Am not able. [2] By itself alone. [3] So.
[4] More nearly related. [5] Seasonable. [6] Rev. ii. 10.
[7] Sickle.

I recommend to you holiness and sanctification, and that you keep yourself clean from this present evil world. We delight to tell our own dreams, and to flatter our own flesh with the hope which we have: it were wisdom for us to be free, plain, honest, and sharp with our own souls, and to charge them to brew better, that they may drink well, and fare well, when time is melted away like snow in a hot summer. Oh, how hard a thing is it, to get the soul to give up with all things on this side of death and doomsday! We say that we are removing and going from this world; but our heart stirreth not one foot off its seat. Alas! I see few heavenly-minded souls, that have nothing upon the earth, but their body of clay going up and down this earth, because their soul and the powers of it are up in Heaven, and there, their hearts live, desire, enjoy, rejoice. Oh! men's souls have no wings, and, therefore, night and day they keep their nest, and are not acquainted with Christ. Sir, take you to your one thing, to Christ, that ye may be acquainted with the taste of his sweetness and excellency, and charge your love not to dote upon this world; for it will not do your business in that day, when nothing will come in good stead to you, but God's favor. Build upon Christ some good, choice, and fast work; for when your soul for many years hath taken the play, and hath posted, and wandered through the creatures, ye will come home again with the wind;—they are not good, at least not the soul's good. It is the infinite Godhead that must allay the sharpness of your hunger after happiness; otherwise there shall still be a want of satisfaction to your desires: and if he should cast in ten worlds into your desires, all shall fall through, and your soul will still cry, "Red[1] hunger, black[1] hunger:"—but I am sure there is sufficient for you in Christ, if ye had seven souls and seven desires in you.

Oh, if[2] I could make my Lord Jesus market-sweet,[3] lovely, desirable, and fair to all the world, both to Jew and Gentile! Oh, let my part of Heaven go for it, so being he would take my tongue to be his instrument, to set out Christ in his whole braveries of love, virtue, grace, sweetness, and matchless glory, to the eyes and hearts of Jews and Gentiles!—but who is sufficient for these things! Oh, for the help of angels' tongues, to make Christ eye-sweet[4] and amiable to many thousands! Oh, how little doth this world see of him, and how far are they from the love of him, seeing there is so much loveliness, beauty, and sweetness in Christ, that no created eye did ever yet see! I would that all men knew his glory, and that I could put many in at the Bridegroom's chamber-door, to see his beauty, and to be partakers of his high, and deep, and broad, and boundless love. Oh, let all the world come nigh and see Christ, and they shall then see more than I can say of him! Oh, if[2] I had a pledge or pawn to lay down for a seaful of his love! that I could come by so much of

[1] *Red* and *black* are used as intensitive words in the Scottish dialect.
[2] Oh, that.
[3] Desirable, so as to be sought after in the public market.
[4] Pleasant to the eye.

Christ, as would satisfy greening[1] and longing for him, or rather increase it, till I were in full possession! I know that we shall meet; and therein I rejoice.

Sir, stand fast in the truth of Christ, that ye have received. Yield to no winds, but ride out, and let Christ be your anchor, and the only He, whom ye shall look to see in peace. Pray for me, his prisoner, that the Lord would send me among you to feed his people.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCXIV.

TO MR. JAMES HAMILTON.

REVEREND, AND DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Our acquaintance is neither in bodily presence, nor on paper; but as sons of the same Father, and sufferers for the same truth.

Let no man doubt that the state of our question, we are now forced to stand to by suffering exile and imprisonment is—If Jesus should reign over his kirk, or not? Oh, if[2] my sinful arm could hold the crown on his head, howbeit it should be stricken off from the shoulder blade! For your ensuing and feared trial, my very dearest in our Lord Jesus, alas! what am I to speak to comfort a soldier of Christ, who hath done a hundred times more for that worthy and honorable cause than I can do? But I know, those of whom the world was not worthy, wandered up and down in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens, and caves of the earth; and that while there is one member of mystical Christ out of Heaven, that member must suffer strokes, till our Lord Jesus draw in that member within the gates of the New Jerusalem, which he will not fail to do at last; for not one toe or finger of that body, but it shall be taken in within the city. What can be our part, in this pitched battle betwixt the Lamb and the Dragon, but to receive the darts in patience, that rebound off us upon our sweet Master; or rather light first upon him, and then rebound off him upon his servants? I think it a sweet north-wind, that bloweth first upon the fair face of the Chief among ten thousand, and then lighteth upon our sinful and black faces. When once the wind bloweth off him upon me, I think it hath a sweet smell of Christ; and so must be some[3] more than a single cross. I know that ye have a guard about you, and your attendance and train for your safety is far beyond your pursuers' force or fraud: it is good, under feud, to be near our war-house, and stronghold. We can do but little to resist them, who persecute us and oppose

[1] Greedily desiring. [2] Oh, that. [3] Somewhat.

him, but keep our blood and our wounds to the next court-day, when our complaints shall be read. If this day be not Christ's, I am sure the morrow shall be his.

As for anything I do in my bonds, when now and then a word falleth from me, alas! it is very little. I am exceedingly grieved that any should conceive anything to be in such a broken and empty reed: let no man impute it to me, that the free and unbought wind, (for I gave nothing for it,) bloweth upon an empty reed. I am his over-burdened debtor. I cry, "Down with men, down, down with all the excellency of the world; and up, up with Christ!" Long, long may that fair One, that holy One, be on high! My curse be upon them that love him not. Oh, how glad would I be, if his glory would grow out, and spring up out of my bonds and sufferings! Certainly since I became his prisoner, he hath won the yolk and heart of my soul. Christ is even become a new Christ to me, and his love greener than it was. And now I strive no more with him. His love shall carry it away. I lay down myself under his love. I desire to sing, and to cry, and to proclaim myself, even under the water, in his common,[1] and eternally indebted to his kindness. I will not offer to quit commons with[2] him, (as we used to say,) for that will not be. All, all for evermore be Christ's. What further trials are before me, I know not; but I know that Christ will have a saved soul of me, over on the other side of the water, on the yonder-side of crosses, and beyond men's wrongs.

I had but one eye, and that they have put out. My one joy, next to the flower of my joys, Christ, was to preach my sweetest, sweetest Master, and the glory of his Kingdom; and it seemed no cruelty to them to put out the poor man's one eye. And now I am seeking about to see if suffering will speak my fair One's praises; and I am trying if a dumb man's tongue can raise one note, or one of Zion's springs to advance my Well-beloved's glory. Oh, if he would make some glory to himself out of a dumb prisoner! I go with child of his word: I cannot be delivered: none here will have my Master: alas! what aileth them at him?

I bless you for your prayers; add to them praises: as I am able, I pay you home. I commend your diving in Christ's Testament; I would I could set out the dead Man's good-will to his friends, in his sweet testament. Speak a prisoner's hearty commendations to Christ; fear not, your ten days[3] will over. Those that are gathered against Mount Zion, their eyes shall melt away in their eye-holes, and their tongues consume away in their mouths, and Christ's withered garden shall grow green again in Scotland. My Lord Jesus hath a word hid in Heaven for Scotland, not yet brought out.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 7, 1637.

[1] Under obligation. [2] To cease to be obliged to.
[3] Rev. ii. 10.

LETTER CCXV.

TO MISTRESS STUART.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am sorry that ye take it so hardly, that I have not written to you.

I am judged to be that which I am not. I fear that if I were put into the fire, I should melt away, and fall down in sherds of painted nature; for truly I have little stuff at home that is worth the eye of God's servants. If there be anything of Christ's in me, (as I dare not deny some of his work,) it is but a spunk[1] of borrowed fire, that can scarce warm myself, and hath little heat for standers-by. I would fain have that which ye and others believe I have; but ye are only witnesses to my outer side, and to some words on paper. Oh, that he would give me more than paper-grace or tongue-grace! Were it not that want paineth me, I should have skailed[2] house, and gone a-begging long since: but Christ hath left me with some hunger, that is more hot than wise, and is ready often to say, "If Christ longed for me, as I do for him, we should not be long in meeting; and if he loved my company as well as I do his, even while I am writing this letter to you, we should flee[3] into each other's arms." But I know there is more will than wit in this languor and pining love for Christ; and no marvel, for love to Christ would have hot harvest, long ere midsummer. But if I have any love to him, Christ hath both love to me, and wit to guide his love; and I see that the best thing I have hath as much dross beside it as might curse me and it both; and, if it were for no more, we have need of a Saviour to pardon the very faults, and diseases, and weakness of the new man, and to take away (to say so) our godly sins, or the sins of our sanctification, and the dross and scum of spiritual love. Wo, wo is me! Oh, what need is there, then, of Christ's calling to scour, and cleanse, and wash away an ugly old body of sin—the very image of Satan! I know nothing surer, than that there is an office for Christ amongst us. I wish for no other heaven on this side of the last sea that I must cross, than this service of Christ, to make my blackness beauty, my deadness life, my guiltiness sanctification. I long much for that day, when I shall be holy. Oh, what spots are yet unwashen![4] Oh, that I could change the skin of the leopard and the moor, and niffer[5] it with some of Christ's fairness! Were my blackness and Christ's beauty carded through-other,[6] (as we use to speak,) his beauty and holiness would eat up my filthiness. But, oh, I have not casten old Adam's hue and color yet! I trow that the best of us hath a smell yet of the old loathsome body of sin and guiltiness. Happy are they for evermore who can employ Christ, and set his blood and death on

[1] Spark. [2] Dispersed. [3] Fly.
[4] Unwashed. [5] Exchange. [6] Promiscuously.

work, to make clean work to God, of foul souls. I know that it is our sin that would have sanctification on the sunny-side of the hill, and holiness with nothing but summer, and crosses no at all. Sin hath made us as tender as if we were made of paper or glass. I am often thinking, what I would think of Christ and burning quick together, of Christ and torturing, and hot melted lead poured in at mouth and navel; yet I have some weak experience, (but very weak indeed,) that suppose Christ and Hell's torments were married together, and if there were no finding of Christ at all, except I went to Hell's furnace, that there, and in no other place, I could meet with him; I trow that if I were as I have been since I was his prisoner, I would beg lodging for God's sake in Hell's hottest furnace, that I might rub souls with Christ. But God be thanked, I shall find him in a better lodging. We get Christ better-cheap[1] than so: when he is rouped[2] to us, we get him but with a shower of summer troubles in this life, as sweet and as soft as to believers as a May-dew.

I would have you and myself helping Christ mystical to weep for his wife; and, oh, that we could mourn for Christ buried in Scotland, and for his two slain witnesses, killed because they prophesied! If we could so importune and solicit God, our buried Lord and his two buried witnesses should rise again. Earth, and clay, and stone, will not bear down Christ and the Gospel in Scotland. I know not if I shall see the second Temple, and the glory of it; but the Lord hath deceived me if it be not to be reared up again. I would wish to give Christ his welcome home again:—my blessing, my joy, my glory, and love be on the Home-comer.

I find no better use of suffering than that Christ's winnowing putteth chaff and corn in the saints to sundry places, and discovereth our dross from his gold, so as corruption and grace are so seen, that Christ saith in the furnace, "That is mine, and this is thine: the scum and the grounds, thy stomach against the persecutors, thy impatience, thy unbelief, thy quarrelling, these are thine; and faith, on-waiting, love, joy, courage, are mine." Oh, let me die one of Christ's on-waiters, and one of his attendants!

I know that your heart and Christ are married together; it were not good to make a divorce. Rue not of that meeting and marriage with such a husband. Pray for me his prisoner. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCXVI.

TO MR. HUGH MACKAIL.

REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter. I bless you for it.

[1] More than gratuitously. [2] Auctioned.

My dry root would take more dew and summer-rain than it getteth, were it not that Christ will have dryness and deadness in us to work upon; if there were no timber to work upon, art would die, and never be seen. I see that grace hath a field to play upon, and to course up and down in our wants; so that I am often thanking God, not for guiltiness, but for guiltiness for Christ to whet and sharpen his grace upon: I am half content to have boils for the plasters of my Lord Jesus. Sickness hath this advantage, that it draweth our sweet Physician's hand, and his holy and soft fingers, to touch our withered and leper skins. It is a blessed fever that fetcheth Christ to the bed-side. I think my Lord's "How doest thou with it, sick Body?" is worth all my pained nights. Surely, I have no more for Christ, than emptiness and want: take or leave, he will get me no otherwise. I must sell myself, and my wants to him; but I have no price to give for him. If he would put a fair and real seal upon his love to me, and bestow upon me a larger share of Christ's love, (which I would fainest be in hands with of anything—I except not Heaven itself,) I should go on sighing and singing under his cross; but the worst is, many take me for somebody, because the wind bloweth upon a withered prisoner; but the truth is, that I am both lean and thin in that, wherein many believe I abound. I would, (if bartering were in my power,) niffer[1] joy with Christ's love and faith, and, instead of the hot sunshine, be content to walk under a cloudy shadow with more grief and sadness, to have more faith and a fair occasion of setting forth and commending Christ, and to make that lovely One, that fair One, that sweetest and dearest Lord Jesus, market-sweet[2] for many ears and hearts in Scotland; and, if it were in my power, to roup[3] Christ to the Three Kingdoms, and withal persuade buyers to come, and to take such sweet wares as Christ, I would think to have many sweet bargains betwixt Christ and the sons of men. I would that I could be humble, and go with a low sail: I would that I had desires with wings, and running upon wheels; swift, and active, and speedy in longing for Christ's honor. But I know that my Lord is as wise here as I dow[4] be thirsty; and infinitely more zealous of his honor, than I can be hungry for the manifestation of it to men and angels. But, oh, that my Lord would take my desires off my hand, and a thousand-fold more unto them, and sow spiritual inclinations upon them, for the coming of Christ's Kingdom to the sons of men! that they might be higher, and deeper, and longer, and broader—for my longest measures are too short for Christ, my depth is ebb[5] and the breadth of my affections to Christ narrowed and pinched. Oh, for an ingine[6] and a wit, to prescribe ways to men, how Christ might be all, in all the world! —Wit is here behind affection, and affection behind obligation. Oh, how little dow[7] I give to Christ, and how much hath he

[1] Exchange.
[2] Sought after, as it were, in the common market.
[3] Auction.
[4] Am able to.
[5] Shallow.
[6] Genius.
[7] Am able.

given me! Oh, that I could sing grace's praises, and love's praises! seeing that I was like a fool soliciting the Law, and making moyen [1] to the Law's court for mercy, and found challenges [2] that way; but now I deny that judge's power; for I am grace's man: I hold not worth a drink of water, the Law, or any lord, but Jesus—and till I bethought me of this, I was slain with doubtings, and fears, and terrors. I praise the new court, and the new Landlord, and the new salvation, purchased in the name of Jesus, and at his instance. Let the Old Man, if he please, go make his moan [3] to the Law, and seek acquaintance thereaway [4] because he is condemned in that court; I hope that the New Man, and I, and Christ together will not be heard: and this is the more soft and the more easy way for me and for my cross together. Seeing that Christ singeth my welcome-home, and taketh me in, and maketh short accounts and short work of reckoning betwixt me and my Judge, I must be Christ's man, and his tenant, and subject to his court. I am sure that suffering for Christ could not be borne otherwise: but I give my hand and my faith to all who would suffer for Christ, that they shall be well handled, and fare well in the same way, that I have found the cross easy and light.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 8, 1637.

LETTER CCXVII.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF GARLOCK.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—If Christ were as I am, that time could work upon him to alter him, or that the morrow could bring a new day to him, or bring a new mind to him, as it is to me a new day, I could not keep a house or a covenant with him: but I find Christ to be Christ, and that he is far, far, even infinite heaven's height above men: and that is all our happiness. Sinners can do nothing, but make wounds, that Christ may heal them; and make debts, that he may pay them; and make falls, that he may raise them; and make deaths, that he may quicken them; and spin out and dig hells for themselves, that he may ransom them. Now I will bless the Lord, that ever there was such a thing as the free grace of God, and a free ransom given for sold souls: only, alas! guiltiness maketh me ashamed to apply Christ, and to think it pride in me, to put out my unclean and withered hand to such a Saviour. But it is neither shame nor pride, for a drowning man to swim to a rock, nor for a ship-broken soul to run himself ashore upon Christ. Suppose once I be guilty, need-force [5] I cannot, I dow not [6] go by [7]

[1] Interest. [2] Accusations. [3] Bemoan himself. [4] In those parts. [5] Of necessity. [6] Am not able. [7] Past.

Christ. We take in good part that pride, that beggars beg from the richer; and who so poor as we? and who so rich as He who selleth fine Gold? (Rev. iii. 18.) I see, then, it is our best, (let guiltiness plead what it listeth,) that we have no mean under the covering of Heaven, but to creep in lowly and submissively with our wants to Christ. I have also cause to give his cross a good name and report. Oh, how worthy is Christ of my feckless[1] and light suffering! and how hath he deserved it at my hands, that, for his honor and glory, I should lay my back under seven hells' pains in one, if he call me to that! But alas! my soul is like a ship run on ground through ebbness[2] of water. I am sanded,[3] and my love is sanded,[4] and I find not how to bring it on float again. It is so cold and dead, that I see not how to bring it to a flame. Fy, fy upon the meeting that my love hath given Christ. Wo, wo is me, I have a lover Christ, and yet I want love for him: I have a lovely and desirable Lord, who is loveworthy, and who beggeth my love and heart, and I have nothing to give him. Dear brother, come further in on Christ, and see a new treasure in him. Come in, and look down, and see angels' wonder, and Heaven and earth's wonder of love, sweetness, majesty, and excellency in him.

I forget you not. Pray for me, that our Lord would be pleased to send me among you again, fraughted and full of Christ.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCXVIII.

TO JOHN BELL, ELDER.

My very loving Friend,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I have very often and long expected your letter: but if ye be well in soul and body, I am the less solicitous.

I beseech you, in the Lord Jesus, to mind your country above: and now, when old age—the twilight going before the darkness of the grave, and the falling low of your sun before your night—is come upon you, advise with Christ, ere ye put your foot into the ship, and turn your back on this life. Many are beguiled with this, that they are free of scandalous and crying abominations; but the tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is for the fire; the man that is not born again, cannot enter into the Kingdom of God:—common honesty will not take men to Heaven. Alas, that men should think that ever they met with Christ, who had never a sick night, through the terrors of God in their souls, or a sore heart for sin! I know that the Lord hath given you light, and the knowledge of his will, but that is not all, neither will that do your turn. I wish you an awakened soul, and that ye beguile not yourself,

[1] Worthless. [2] Shallowness. [3] Stranded.

in the matter of your salvation. My dear brother, search yourself with the candle of God, and try if the life of God and Christ be in you. Salvation is not casten to every man's door. Many are carried over sea and land, to a far country in a ship, whileas they sleep much of all the way; but men are not landed at Heaven sleeping. The righteous are scarcely saved; and many run as fast as either you or I, who miss the prize and the crown. God send me salvation, and save me from a disappointment, and I seek no more. Men think it but a stride, or step over to Heaven; but when so few are saved, even of a number like the sand of the sea —but a handful and a remnant, (as God's word saith)—what cause have we to shake ourselves out of ourselves, and to ask our poor soul, "Whither goest thou? Where shalt thou lodge at night? Where are thy charters and writs of thy heavenly inheritance?" I have known a man turn a key in a door, and lock it by.[1] Many men leap over, (as they think,) and leap in. Oh, see! see that ye give not your salvation a wrong cast, and think all is well, and leave your soul loose and uncertain. Look to your building, and to your ground-stone,[2] and what signs of Christ are in you, and set this world behind your back. It is time, now in the evening, to cease from your ordinary work, and high time to know of your lodging at night: it is your salvation that is in dependence, and that is a great and weighty business, though many make light of the matter.

Now, the Lord enable you by his grace to work it out.

Your lawful, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCXIX.

TO MR. JOHN ROW.

Reverend, and dear Brother,—I received yours.—I bless his high and great name, that I like my sweet Master still the longer the better: a sight of his cross is more awsome[3] than the weight of it. I think the worst things of Christ, even his reproaches and his cross, (when I look on these not with bleared eyes,) far rather to be chosen than the laughter and worm-eaten joys of my adversaries. Oh, that they were as I am, except my bonds! My Witness is above, that my ministry, next to Christ, is dearest to me of anything; but I lay it down at Christ's feet, for his glory and his honor as supreme Lawgiver, which is dearer to me.

My dear brother, if ye will receive the testimony of a poor prisoner of Christ, who dare not now dissemble for the world, I believe certainly, and expect thanks from the Prince of the kings of the

[1] That is, turn the bolt not into, but past the staple or socket that should hold it.
[2] Foundation.
[3] Awful.

earth, for my poor hazards, (such as they are,) for his honorable cause, whom I can never enough extol, for his running-over love to my sad soul, since I came hither. Oh, that I could get him set on high and praised! I seek no more, as the top and root of my desires, than that Christ may make glory to himself, and edification to the weaker, out of my sufferings.

I desire ye would help me both to pray and praise. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 8th, 1637.

LETTER CCXX.

TO MY LORD CRAIGHALL.

My Lord,—I persuade myself that notwithstanding the greatness of this temptation, ye will not let Christ want a witness of you, to avow him before this evil generation. And if ye advise with God's truth, (the perfect testament of Christ, that forbiddeth all men's additions to his worship,) and with the truly learned, and with all the sanctified in this land, and with that warner within you, (which will not fail to speak against you, in God's name, if ye be not now fast and fixed for Christ,) I hope, then, that your Lordship will acquit yourself as a man of courage for Christ, and refuse to bow your knee superstitiously and idolatrously to wood or stone, or any creature whatsoever. I persuade myself that when ye shall take good night at this world, ye shall think it God's truth I now write.

Some fear that your Lordship hath obliged yourself to His Majesty by promise to satisfy his desire. If it be so, my dear, and worthy Lord, hear me for your soul's good. Think upon swimming ashore after this shipwreck, and be pleased to write your humble apology to his Majesty; it may be that God will give you favor in his eyes. However it be, far be it from you to think a promise made out of weakness, and extorted by the terror of a king, should bind you to wrong your Lord, Jesus. But for myself, I give no faith to that report, but I believe that ye will prove fast to Christ. To this grace I recommend you.

Your Lordship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 8, 1637.

LETTER CCXXI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Worthy, and dearest in the Lord,—I rejoice that you are a partaker of the sufferings of Christ. Faint not, keep breath,

believe; howbeit men, and husband, and friends, prove weak, yet your strength faileth not. It is not pride for a drowning man to grip to [1] the rock. It is your glory to lay hold on your Rock. O woman greatly beloved! I testify and avouch it in my Lord, that the prayers ye sent to Heaven, these many years by-gone,[2] are come up before the Lord and shall not be forgotten. What it is that will come, I cannot tell; but I know that, as the Lord liveth, these cries shall bring down mercy. I charge you, and those people with you, to go on without fainting or fear, and still believe, and take no nay-say.[3] If ye leave off, the field is lost; if ye continue, our enemies shall be a tottering wall, and a bowing fence. I write it, (and keep this letter,) utter, utter desolation shall be to your adversaries, and to the haters of the Virgin-daughter of Scotland. The bride will yet sing, as in the days of her youth. Salvation shall be her walls and bulwarks. The dry olive-tree shall bud again, and dry dead bones shall live; for the Lord will prophesy to the dry bones, and the Spirit shall come upon them, and we shall live.

I rejoice to hear of John Carsen! I shall not forget him. Remember me to Grizzel, and Jean Brown. Your husband hath made me heavy; but be courageous in the Lord. I send blessings to Samuel and William. Show them that I will them to seek God in their youth.

Grace is yours.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 8, 1637.

LETTER CCXXII.

TO MY LADY CULROSS.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am much refreshed with your letter, now at length come to me. I find my Lord Jesus cometh not in that precise way that I lay wait for him; he hath a gate [4] of his own: oh, how high are his ways above my ways! I see but little of him. It is best not to offer to learn him a lesson, but to give him absolutely his own will, in coming, going, ebbing, and in the manner of his gracious working. I want nothing but a back-burden of Christ's love. I would go through Hell, and the thick [5] of the damned devils, to have a hearty feast of Christ's love; for he hath fettered me with his love, and run away, and left me a chained man.

Wo is me, that I was so loose, rash, vain, and graceless, in my unbelieving thoughts of Christ's love. But what can a soul, under a non-entry, (when my rights [6] were wadset [7] and lost,) do else,

[1] To cling to. [2] By-passed. [3] Nay-word, denial. [4] Manner.
[5] Throng. [6] Charters. [7] Alienated.

but make a false libel against Christ's love! I know that yourself, madam, and many moe, will be witnesses against me, if I repent not of my unbelief; for I have been seeking the Pope's wares, some hire for grace within myself. I have not learned, as I should do, to put my stock and all my treasure into Christ's hand; but I would have a stock of mine own, and ere I was aware, I was taking hire to be the Law's advocate, to seek justification by works. I forgot, that grace is the only garland that is worn in Heaven, upon the heads of the glorified. And now I half rejoice, that I have sickness for Christ to work upon. Since I must have wounds, well is my soul! I have a day's work for my Physician, Christ. I hope to give Christ his own calling: it setteth him full well to cure diseases.

My ebbings are very low, and the tide is far out when my Beloved goeth away; and then I cry, "Oh, cruelty! to put out the poor man's one eye;" and that was my joy next to Christ, to preach my Well-beloved: then I make a noise about Christ's house, looking unco-like [1] in at his window, and casting my love and my desires over the wall, till God send better. I am often content that my bill lie in Heaven, till the day of my departure, providing I had assurance, that mercy shall be written on the back of it. I would not care for on-waiting; but when I draw in a tired arm, and an empty hand withal, it is much to me to keep my thoughts in order—but I will not get a gate [2] for Christ's love, when I have done all I can. I would fain yield to his stream, and row with Christ, and not against him. But while I live, I see that Christ's Kingdom in me will not be peaceable—so many thoughts in me rise up against his honor and kingly power. Surely, I have not expressed all his sweet kindness to me: I spare to do it, lest I be deemed to seek myself; but his breath hath smelled of the powders of the merchant, and of the king's spikenard. I think that I conceive new thoughts of Heaven, because the chart and the map of Heaven, which he letteth me now see, is so fair, and so sweet. I am sure that we are niggards, and sparing bodies in seeking. I verily judge that we know not how much may be had in this life; there is yet something beyond all that we see, that seeking would light upon. Oh, that my love sickness would put me to a business, when all the world are sound-sleeping, to cry and knock! But the truth is, that since I came hither, I have been wondering, that, after my importunity to have my fill of Christ's love, I have not gotten a real sign, but have come from him crying, "Hunger, hunger." I think that Christ letteth me see meat in my extremity of hunger, and giveth me none of it: when I am near the apple, he draweth back his hand, and goeth away to cause me follow; and again, when I am within an arm-length of the apple, he maketh a new break to the gate [3] and I have him to seek of new. He seemeth not to pity my dwining [4] and my swooning for his

[1] Having an appearance of strangeness. [2] Way.
[3] That is, maketh a rush out to the door, apparently for the purpose of escaping.
[4] Pining.

love. I dare sometimes put my hunger over to him, to be judged, if I would not buy him with a thousand years in the hottest furnace in Hell, so being I might enjoy him. But my hunger is fed with want and absence. I hunger, and I have not; but my comfort is to lye and wait on, and to put my poor soul and my sufferings into Christ's hand. Let him make anything out of me, so being he be glorified in my salvation; for I know that I am made for him. Oh, that my Lord may win his own gracious end in me. I will not be at ease, while I but stand so far aback. Oh, if I were near him, and with him, that this poor soul might be satisfied with himself!

Your son-in-law, W. G., is now truly honored for his Lord and Master's cause: when the Lord is fanning Zion, it is a good token that he is a true branch of the vine, that the Lord beginneth first to dress him. He is strong in his Lord, as he hath written to me, and his wife is his encourager, which should make you rejoice.

As for your son, who is your grief, your Lord waited on you and me, till we were ripe, and brought us in. It is your part to pray and wait upon him: when he is ripe he will be spoken for. Who can command our Lord's wind to blow? I know that it shall be your good in the latter end. That is one of your waters to Heaven, ye could not go about it—there are the fewer behind. I remember you and him, and yours, as I am able: but alas! I am believed to be something, and I am nothing but an empty reed: wants are my best riches, because I have these supplied by Christ.

Remember my dearest love to your brother. I know that he pleadeth with his Harlot-mother for her apostasy. I know also that ye are kind to my worthy Lady Kenmure, a woman beloved of the Lord, who hath been very mindful of my bonds. The Lord give her and her child to find mercy in the day of Christ! Great men are dry and cold in doing for me; the tinkling of chains for Christ affrighteth them: but, let my Lord break all my idols, I will yet bless him. I am obliged to my Lord Lorn. I wish him mercy.

Remember my bonds with praises; and pray for me, that my Lord may leaven the North, by my bonds and sufferings.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 9, 1637.

LETTER CCXXIII.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF KNOCKGRAY.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—There is no question but our Mother-church hath a Father, and that she shall not die without an heir, that her enemies shall not make

Mount Zion their heritage. We see that whither-soever Zion's enemies go, suppose they dig many miles under the ground, yet our Lord findeth them out: and he hath vengeance laid up in store for them, and the poor and needy shall not always be forgotten. Our hope was drooping and withering, and man was saying, "What can God make out of the old dry bones of this buried Kirk?" The prelates and their followers were a grave above us. It is like that our Lord is to open our graves, and purposeth to cause his two slain witnesses to rise on the third day. Oh, how long wait I, to hear our weeping Lord, Jesus, sing again, and triumph and rejoice, and divide the spoil!

I find it hard work to believe, when the course of providence goeth cross-wise to our faith, and when misted[1] souls in a dark night cannot know east by west, and our sea-compass seemeth to fail us. Every man is a believer in day-light: a fair day seemeth to be made all of faith and hope. What a trial of gold is it, to smoke it a little above the fire? but to keep gold perfectly yellow-colored amidst the flames, and to be turned from vessel to vessel, and yet to cause our furnace to sound, and speak, and cry the praises of the Lord, is another matter. I know that my Lord made me not for fire, howbeit he hath fitted me in some measure for the fire. I bless his high name, that I wax not paler, neither have I lost the color of gold, and that his fire hath made me somewhat thin,[2] and that my Lord may pour me into any vessel he pleaseth. For a small wager I may justly quit my part of this world's laughter, and give up with time, and cast out[3] with the pleasures of this world.

I know a man, who wondered to see any in this life laugh or sport: surely our Lord seeketh this of us, as to any rejoicing in present perishing things. I see above all things, that we may sit down, and fold legs and arms, and stretch ourselves upon Christ, and laugh at the feathers that children are chasing here. For I think the men of this world, like children in a dangerous storm in the sea, that play and make sport with the white foam of the waves thereof, coming in to sink and drown them; so are men making fools' sports with the white pleasures of a stormy world, that will sink them. But, alas! what have we to do with their sports which they make? If Solomon said of laughter that it was madness, what may we say of this world's laughing and sporting themselves with gold and silver, and honors and court, and broad large conquests,[4] but that they are poor souls, in the height and rage of a fever gone mad? then a straw, a fig for all created sports and rejoicing out of Christ. Nay, I think that this world, at its prime and perfection, when it is come to the top of its excellency, and to the bloom, might be bought with an half-penny; and that it would scarce weigh the worth of a drink of water. There is nothing better than to esteem it our crucified idol, that is dead and slain, as Paul did, (Gal. vi. 14.) Then let pleasures be crucified, and riches be crucified, and court and honor be crucified; and

[1] Bewildered. [2] Fluid. [3] Fall out. [4] Acquisitions.

since the apostle saith that the world is crucified to him, we may put this world to the hanged man's doom, and to the gallows: and who will give much for a hanged man? and as little should we give for a hanged and crucified world. Yet, what a sweet smell hath this dead carrion to many fools in the world! and how many wooers and suitors findeth this hanged carrion! Fools are pulling it off the gallows, and contending for it. Oh, when will we learn to be mortified men, and to have our fill of those things that have but their short summer quarter of this life! If we saw our Father's house, and that great and fair city, the New Jerusalem, which is up above sun and moon, we would cry to be over the water, and to be carried in Christ's arms out of this borrowed prison.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCXXIV.

TO FULWOOD, YOUNGER.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Upon the report of this worthy bearer concerning you, I thought good to speak a word to you—it is enough for acquaintance, that we are one in Christ.

My earnest desire to you is, that ye would, in the fear of God, compare your inch and hand-breadth of time with vast eternity, and your thoughts of this now fair, blooming and green world, with the thoughts which ye will have of it when corruption and worms will make their houses in your eye-holes, and eat your flesh, and make that body dry bones. If ye so do, I know then that your light of this world's vanity shall be more clear than now it is; and I am persuaded ye will then think, that men's labors for this clay-idol are to be laughed at. Therefore, come near, and take a view of that transparent beauty that is in Christ, which would busy the love of ten thousand millions of worlds and angels, and hold them all at work. Surely I am grieved, that men will not spend their whole love upon that royal and princely Well-beloved, that high and lofty One—for it is cursed love that runneth another way than upon him. And for myself, if I had ten loves and ten souls, oh, how glad would I be, if he would break in upon me and take possession of them all! Wo, wo is me, that he and I are so far asunder! I hope we shall be in one country and one house together. Truly pain of love-sickness for Jesus maketh me to think it long, long, long to the dawning of that day. Oh, that he would cut short years and months and hours, and over-leap time, that we might meet!

And for this truth, sir, that ye profess, I avow—before the world of men and angels, that it is the way, and the only way, to our country, the rest are by-ways; and, that what I suffer for is

the apple of Christ's eye, even his honor as Lawgiver and King of his Church. I think death too little ere I forsook it. Do not, sir, I beseech you in the Lord, make Christ's court thinner by drawing back from him; it is too thin already; for I dare pledge my heaven upon it, that he will win this plea, and that the fools who plea against him shall lose the wager, which is their part of salvation, except they take better heed to their ways. Sir, free grace that we give no hire for, is a jewel which our Lord giveth to few. Stand fast in the hope that you are called unto. Our master will rend the clouds, and will be upon us quickly, and clear our cause, and bring us all out in our blacks and whites. Clean, clean garments, in the Bridegroom's eye, are of great worth. Step over this hand-breadth of world's glory, into our Lord's new world of grace, and ye will laugh at the feathers that children are chasing in the air. I verily judge, that these inns, which men are building their nest in, are not worth a drink of cold water. It is a rainy and smoky house: best we come out of it, lest we be choked with the smoke thereof. Oh, that my adversaries knew how sweet my sighs for Christ are, and what it is for a sinner to lay his head between Christ's breasts and to be over head and ears in Christ's love! Alas, I cannot cause paper to speak the height, and breadth, and depth of it! I have not a balance to weigh the worth of my Lord Jesus. Heaven, ten heavens would not be the beam of a balance to weigh him in. I must give over praising of him. Angels see but little of him. Oh, if[1] that fair one would take the mask off his fair face, that I might see him—a kiss of him through his mask is half a heaven. "O day, dawn! O time, run fast! O Bridegroom, post, post fast, that we may meet! O Heavens, cleave in two, that that bright face and head may set itself through the clouds!" Oh, that the corn were ripe, and this world prepared for his hook![2]

Sir, be pleased to remember a prisoner's bonds. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 10, 1637.

LETTER CCXXV.

TO HIS PARISHIONERS.

DEARLY beloved and longed for in the Lord, my crown and my joy in the day of Christ, grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

I long exceedingly to know, if the oft-spoken-of match betwixt you and Christ holdeth; and if ye follow on to know the Lord. My day-thoughts and my night-thoughts are of you: while ye sleep I am afraid of your souls, that they be off the rock; next to

[1] Oh, that. [2] Sickle.

my Lord Jesus and this fallen Kirk, ye have the greatest share of my sorrow, and also of my joy; ye are the matter of the tears, care, fear, and daily prayers of an oppressed prisoner of Christ. As I am in bonds for my high and lofty One, my royal and princely Master, my Lord Jesus; so I am in bonds for you. For I should have slept in my warm nest, and kept the fat world in my arms, and the cords of my tabernacle should have been fastened more strongly, I might have sung an evangel[1] of ease to my soul and you for a time, with my brethren, the sons of my Mother, that were angry at me, and have thrust me out of the vineyard, if I would have been broken, and drawn on to mire you the Lord's flock, and to cause you to eat pastures trodden upon with men's feet, and to drink foul and muddy waters:—but truly the Almighty was a terror to me, and his fear made me afraid. O my Lord! judge if my ministry be not dear to me, but not so dear by many degrees as Christ Jesus my Lord. God knoweth the sad and heavy Sabbaths I have had since I laid down at my Master's feet my two shepherds' staves. I have been often saying, as it is written, (Lam. iii. 52, 53,) "My enemies chased me sore like a bird, without cause: they have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me;" for, next to Christ, I had but one joy, the apple of the eye of my delights, to preach Christ my Lord, and they have violently plucked that away from me. And it was to me like the poor man's one eye, and they have put out that eye, and quenched my light in the inheritance of the Lord;—but my eye is toward the Lord. I know that I shall see the salvation of God, and that my hope shall not always be forgotten. And my sorrow shall want nothing to complete it, and to make me say, "What availeth it me to live?" if ye follow the voice of a stranger, of one that cometh into the sheepfold not by Christ the door, but climbeth up another way. If the man build his hay and stubble upon the golden foundation, Christ Jesus already laid among you, and ye follow him, I assure you, the man's work shall burn, and never bide[2] God's fire, and ye and he both shall be in danger of everlasting burning except ye repent. Oh, if[3] any pain, any sorrow, any loss that I can suffer for Christ, and for you, were laid in pledge to buy Christ's love to you, and that I could lay my dearest joys next to Christ my Lord in the gap betwixt you and eternal destruction! Oh, if[3] I had paper as broad as Heaven and earth, and ink as the sea and all the rivers and fountains of the earth, and were able to write the love, the worth, the excellency, the sweetness, and due praises of our dearest and fairest Well-beloved; and then, if[3] ye could read and understand it! What could I want, if my ministry among you should make a marriage between the little bride in those bounds and the Bridegroom? Oh, how rich a prisoner were I, if I could obtain of my Lord, (before whom I stand for you,) the salvation of you all! Oh, what a prey had I gotten, to have you catched in Christ's net! O then, I had cast out my Lord's lines and his net with a rich gain! Oh

[1] Gospel, Luke xii. 19. [2] Endure. [3] That.

then, well-ware [1] pained breast and sore [2] back, and crazed body, in speaking early and late to you! My Witness is above, your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me. I would subscribe a suspension, and a fristing [3] of my heaven for many hundred years, (according to God's good pleasure,) if you were sure in the upper lodging, in our Father's house, before me. I take to witness Heaven and earth against you, I take instruments [4] in the hands of that sun and daylight that beheld us, and in the hands of the timber and walls of that Kirk, if I drew not up a fair contract of marriage betwixt you and Christ, if I went not with offers betwixt the Bridegroom and you; and your conscience did bear you witness, your mouths confessed, that there were many fair trystes [5] and meetings drawn on betwixt Christ and you at communion feasts, and other occasions. There were bracelets, jewels, rings, and love-letters, sent to you by the Bridegroom. It was told you what a fair dowry ye should have, and what a house your Husband and ye should dwell in, and what was the Bridegroom's excellency, sweetness, might, power, the eternity and glory of his Kingdom, the exceeding deepness of His love, who sought his black wife through pain, fires, shame, death, and the grave, and swimmed the salt sea for her, undergoing the curse of the Law, and then was made a curse for you, and ye then consented, and said, "Even so I take him." I counsel you to beware of the new and strange leaven of men's inventions, beside and against the word of God, contrary to the oath of this Kirk, now coming among you. I instructed you of the superstition and idolatry of kneeling in the instant of receiving the Lord's supper, and of crossing in baptism, and of the observing of men's days without any warrant of Christ, our perfect Lawgiver. Countenance not the surplice, the attire of the mass-priest, the garment of Baal's priests. The abominable bowing to altars of tree [6] is coming upon you. Hate, and keep yourselves from idols. Forbear in any case to hear the reading of the new fatherless Service-book,[7] full of gross heresies, popish and superstitious errors, without any warrant of Christ, tending to the overthrow of preaching. You owe no obedience to the bastard canons: they are unlawful, blasphemous, and superstitious. All the ceremonies that lye in Anti-christ's foul womb, the wares of that great Mother of fornications, the Kirk of Rome, are to be refused. Ye see whither they lead you. Continue still in the doctrine which ye have received. Ye heard of me the whole counsel of God. Sew no clouts upon Christ's robe. Take Christ in his rags and losses, and as persecuted by men, and be content to sigh and pant up the mountain, with Christ's cross on your back. Let me be reputed a false prophet, (and your conscience once said the contrary,)

1 Well expended. 2 Aching.

3 A postponing, with the hope, however, of ultimately obtaining.

4 In consequence of a decision, any one who has an interest in the court, is said *to take instruments* in the hands of the clerk, when he means to declare that he claims the benefit of that decision, and views the matter as settled.

5 Appointments to meet. 6 Wood. 7 Book of Common Prayer.

if your Lord Jesus will not stand by you and maintain you, and maintain your cause against your enemies.

I have heard, (and my soul is grieved for it,) that since my departure from you, many among you are turned back from the good old way, to the dog's vomit again. Let me speak to these men. It was not without God's special direction, that the first sentence that ever my mouth uttered to you was that of John ix. 39, "And Jesus said, For judgment came I into the world, that they which see not might see, and they which see might be made blind." It is possible that my first meeting and yours may be when we shall both stand before the dreadful Judge of the world; and in the name and authority of the Son of God, my great King and Master, I write, by these presents, summonses to those men. I arrest their souls and bodies to the day of our compearance.[1] Their eternal damnation standeth subscribed, and sealed in Heaven, by the handwriting of the great Judge of quick and dead; and I am ready to stand up, as a preaching witness against such to their face, on that day, and to say amen to their condemnation, except they repent. The vengeance of the Gospel is heavier than the vengeance of the Law: the Mediator's malediction and vengeance is twice vengeance, and that vengeance is the due portion of such men; and there I leave them as bound men, aye and whill[2] they repent and amend. Ye were witnesses how the Lord's day was spent while I was among you. O sacrilegious robber of God's day, what wilt thou answer the Almighty when he seeketh so many Sabbaths back again from thee? What will the curser, swearer, and blasphemer do, when his tongue shall be roasted in that broad and burning Lake of fire and brimstone; and what will the drunkard do, when tongue, lungs, and liver, bones, and all, shall boil and shall fry in a torturing fire? He shall be far from his barrels of strong drink then, and there is not a cold well of water for him in Hell. What shall be the case of the wretch, the covetous man, the oppressor, the deceiver, the earth-worm, who can never get his wombful[3] of clay, when, in the day of Christ, gold and silver must lye burnt in ashes, and he must compear[4] and answer his Judge, and quit his clayey and noughty[5] heaven? Wo, wo, for evermore, be to the time-turning[6] atheist, who hath one god and one religion for summer, and another god and another religion for winter, and the day of fanning, when Christ fanneth all that is in his barn-floor—who hath a conscience for every fair and market, and the soul of him runneth upon these oiled wheels, time, custom, the world, and command of men. Oh, if[7] the careless atheist, and sleeping man, who edgeth by[8] all with "God forgive our pastors if they lead us wrong, we must do as they command," and layeth down his head upon time's bosom, and giveth his conscience to a deputy, and sleepeth so whill the

[1] Appearance.
[2] Forever and until; that is, without possibility of escape.
[3] Belly-full.
[4] Appear.
[5] Having nothing in it.
[6] Changing with the times.
[7] Oh, that.
[8] Sidleth past.

smoke of Hell-fire flee [1] up in his throat, and cause him to start out of is doleful bed! oh, if [2] such a man would awake. Many woes are for the over-gilded and gold-plastered hypocrite. A heavy doom is for the liar and white-tongued flatterer: and the fleeing [3] book of God's fearful vengeance, twenty cubits long, and ten cubits broad, that goeth out from the face of God, shall enter into the house, and in upon the soul of him that stealeth and sweareth falsely by God's name, (Zech. v. 2, 3.) I denounce eternal burning, hotter than Sodom's flames, upon the men that boil in filthy lusts of fornication, adultery, incest, and the like wickedness; no room, no, not a foot-broad,[4] for such vile dogs within the clean Jerusalem. Many of you put off all with this, "God forgive us, we know no better:" I renew my old answer, (2 Thes. i. 8,) the Judge is coming in flaming fire, with all his mighty angels, to render vengeance to all those that know not God, and believe not. I have often told you, that security will slay you. All men say they have faith—as many men and women now, as many saints in Heaven—and all believe, (say ye,) that every foul dog is clean enough, and good enough for the clean and new Jerusalem above. Every man hath conversion and the new birth; but it is not leel come;[5] they had never a sick night for sin; conversion came to them in a night-dream. In a word, Hell will be empty at the day of Judgment, and Heaven pang [6] full. Alas! it is neither easy nor ordinary to believe and to be saved. Many must stand, in the end, at Heaven's gates; when they go to take out their faith, they take out a fair nothing, or, (as ye use to speak,) a blaflum.[7] Oh, lamentable disappointment! I pray you, I charge you in the name of Christ make fast work of Christ and salvation.

I know there are some believers among you, and I write to you, O poor broken-hearted believers, all the comforts of Christ in the Old and New Testaments are yours. Oh, what a Father and Husband ye have! Oh, if [2] I had pen and ink, and ingine [8] to write of him! Let Heaven and earth be consolidated into massy and pure gold, it will not weigh the thousandth part of Christ's love to a soul, even to me a poor prisoner. Oh, that is a massy and marvellous love! Men and angels! unite your force and strength in one, ye shall not heave, nor poise it off the ground. Ten thousand worlds—as many worlds as angels can number, and then as a new world of angels can multiply—would not all be the balk [9] of a balance to weigh Christ's excellency, sweetness, and love. Put ten earths into one, and let a rose grow greater than ten whole earths, or whole worlds, oh, what beauty would be in it, and what a smell would it cast!—but a blast of the breath of that fairest Rose in all God's paradise, even of Christ Jesus our Lord, one look of that fairest face would be infinitely, in beauty and smell, above all imaginable and created glory. I wonder that

1 Fly. 2 Oh, that. 3 Flying.
4 Foot-breadth. 5 Lawfully obtained. 6 Crammed.
7 An illusion. 8 Genius. 9 Beam.

men dow bide off[1] Christ. I would esteem myself blessed, if I could make an open proclamation, and gather all the world, that are living upon the earth, Jew and Gentile, and all that shall be born till the blowing of the last trumpet, to flock round about Christ, and to stand looking, wondering, admiring, and adoring his beauty and sweetness; for his fire is hotter than any other fire, his love sweeter than common love, his beauty surpasseth all other beauty. When I am heavy and sad, one of his love-looks would do me meikle world's good.[2] Oh, if ye would fall in love with him, how blessed were I! how glad would my soul be to help you to love him! But amongst us all, we could not love him enough. He is the Son of the Father's love, and God's delight—the Father's love lyeth all upon him. Oh, if[3] all mankind would fetch all their love, and lay it upon him! Invite him, and take him home to your houses, in the exercise of prayer, morning and evening, as I often desired you; especially now, let him not want lodging in your houses, nor lie in the fields, when he is shut out of pulpits and Kirks. If ye will be content to take Heaven by violence, and the wind on your face for Christ and his cross, I am here one who hath some trial of Christ's cross, and I can say, that Christ was ever kind to me, but he overcometh[4] himself, (if I may speak so,) in kindness while I suffer for him. I give you my word for it, Christ's cross is not so evil as they call it; it is sweet, light, and comfortable. I would not be without the visitations of love, and the very breathings of Christ's mouth when he kisseth, and my Lord's delightsome smiles and love-embracements, under my sufferings for him, for a mountain of gold, or for all the honors, court, and grandeur of velvet kirkmen. Christ hath the yolk and heart of my love. "I am my Beloved's, and my Well-beloved is mine." Oh, that ye were all hand-fasted[5] to Christ! O my dearly-beloved in the Lord, I would I could change my voice and had a tongue tuned by the hand of my Lord, and had the art of speaking of Christ, that I might paint out unto you the worth, and highness, and greatness, and excellency of that fairest and renowned Bridegroom! I beseech you by the mercies of the Lord, by the sighs, tears, and heart's-blood of our Lord Jesus, by the salvation of your poor and precious souls, set up[6] the mountain, that ye and I may meet before the Lamb's throne, amongst the congregation of the first-born. Lord grant that that may be the trysting-place,[7] that ye and I may put up our hands together, and pluck, and eat the apples, off the Tree of Life, and that we may feast together, and drink together of that pure River of the water of life, that cometh out from under the Throne of God, and of the Lamb. Oh, how little is your hand-breadth and span-length of days here! Your inch of time is less than when ye and I parted. Eternity, eternity is coming, posting on with wings—then shall

1 Are able to keep from running upon.
2 Good worth the value of the great world.
3 Oh, that.
4 Surpasseth, goeth beyond.
5 Affianced.
6 Begin to climb, determined to reach the summit.
7 Appointed place of meeting.

every man's blacks and whites be brought to light. Oh, how low will your thoughts be of this fair-skinned but heart-rotten apple, the vain, vain, feckless [1] world, when the worms shall make their houses in your eye-holes, and shall eat off the flesh from the ball of your cheeks, and shall make that body a number of dry bones! Think not that the common gate [2] of serving God, as neighbors and others do, will bring you to Heaven. Few, few are saved. The Devil's court is thick [3] and many: he hath the greatest number of mankind for his vassals. I know this world is a forest of thorns in your way to Heaven; but you must go through it. Acquaint yourselves with the Lord: hold fast Christ; hear his voice only; bless his name; sanctify and keep his day; keep the New Commandment, "Love one another:" let the Holy Spirit dwell in your bodies; and be clean and holy: love not the world: lie not, love and follow truth: learn to know God: keep in mind what I taught you; for God will seek an account of it, when I am far from you: abstain from all evil, and all appearance of evil: follow good carefully: seek peace and follow after it: honor your King, and pray for him: remember me to God in your prayers, I do not forget you. I told you often, while I was with you, and now I write it again, heavy, sad and sore, is that stroke of the Lord's wrath that is coming upon Scotland. Wo, wo, wo to this Harlot-land! for they shall take the cup of God's wrath from his hands, and drink, and spue, and fall, and not rise again. In, in, in with speed, to your stronghold, ye prisoners of hope; and hide you there, whill the anger of the Lord pass! Follow not the pastors of this land, for the sun is gone down upon them. As the Lord liveth, they lead you from Christ, and from the good old way; yet the Lord will keep the Holy City, and make this withered Kirk to bud again like a rose, and a field blessed of the Lord.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. The prayers and blessings of a prisoner of Christ, in bonds for him, and for you, be with you all, Amen.

Your lawful, and loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, July 14, 1637.

LETTER CCXXVI.

TO THE LADY KILCONQUHAIR.

MISTRESS,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am glad to hear that ye have your face homewards towards your Father's house, now when so many are for a home nearer-hand.[4] But your Lord calleth you to another life and glory than is to be found hereaway:[5] and, therefore, I would counsel you to make sure the charters and rights [6] which ye have to salvation. You came to

1 Unsubstantial, worthless. 2 Way, manner. 3 Thronged, crowded.
4 Nearer. 5 In this present state. 6 Title-deeds.

this life about a necessary and weighty business, to tryste [1] with Christ anent [2] your precious soul, and the eternal salvation of it. This is the most necessary business ye have in this life; and your other adoes [3] beside this, are but toys, and feathers, and dreams, and fancies. This is in the greatest haste, and should be done first. Means are used in the Gospel to draw on a meeting betwixt Christ and you. If ye neglect your part of it, it is as if ye would tear the contract before Christ's eyes, and give up the match, that there would be no more communing about that business. I know that other lovers, beside Christ, are in suit of you, and your soul hath many wooers; but I pray you to make a chaste virgin of your soul, and let it love but one: most worthy is Christ alone of all your soul's love, howbeit your love were higher than the Heaven, and deeper than the lowest of this earth, and broader than this world. Many, alas! too many, make a common strumpet of their soul for every lover that cometh to the house. Marriage with Christ would put your love and your heart by the gate [4] out of the way, and out of the eye of all other unlawful suitors; and then you have a ready answer for all others, "I am already promised away to Christ; the match is concluded, my soul hath a husband already, and it cannot have two husbands." Oh, if [5] the world did but know what a smell the ointments of Christ cast, and how ravishing his beauty is, even the beauty of the fairest of the sons of men, and how sweet and powerful his voice is, the voice of that one Well-beloved! Certainly where Christ cometh, he runneth away with the soul's love, so that it cannot be commanded. I would far rather look but through the hole of Christ's door, to see but the one half of his fairest and most comely face, (for he looketh like Heaven,) suppose I should never win in [6] to see his excellency and glory to the full, than enjoy the flower, the bloom, and the chiefest excellency of the glory and riches of ten worlds. Lord send me, for my part, but the meanest share of Christ that can be given to any of the indwellers of the New Jerusalem. But I know my Lord is no niggard: he can, and he becometh him well to give more than my narrow soul can receive. If there were ten thousand thousand millions of worlds, and as many heavens, full of men and angels, Christ would not be pinched to supply all our wants, and to fill us all. Christ is a well of life; but who knoweth how deep it is to the bottom? This soul of ours hath love, and cannot but love some fair one: and, oh, what a fair one, what an only one, what an excellent, lovely, ravishing one, is Jesus! Put the beauty of ten thousand thousand worlds of paradises, like the Garden of Eden, in one; put all trees, all flowers, all smells, all colors, all tastes, all joys, all sweetness, all loveliness in one: oh, what a fair and excellent thing would that be? and yet it would be less to that fair and dearest Well-beloved, Christ, than one drop of rain to the

[1] To transact engagements. [2] Concerning. [3] Occupations.
[4] Past the path. [5] That. [6] Get in.

whole seas, rivers, lakes, and fountains of ten thousand earths. Oh, but Christ is Heaven's wonder, and earth's wonder! What marvel that his Bride saith, (Cant. v. 16,) "He is altogether lovely?" Oh, that black souls will not come and fetch all their love to this fair One? Oh, if[1] I could invite and persuade thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand of Adam's sons to flock about my Lord Jesus, and to come and take their fill of love! Oh, pity for evermore, that there should be such a one as Christ Jesus, so boundless, so bottomless, and so incomparable in infinite excellency and sweetness, and so few to take him! Oh, oh, ye poor, dry, and dead souls, why will ye not come hither with your toom[2] vessels, and your empty souls, to this huge, and fair, and deep, and sweet Well of life; and fill all your toom[2] vessels? Oh, that Christ should be so large in sweetness and worth, and we, so narrow, so pinched, so ebb,[3] and so void of all happiness,—and yet men will not take him! they lose their love miserably, who will not bestow it upon this lovely One. Alas! these five thousand years, Adam's fools, his waster[4] heirs, have been wasting and lavishing out their love and their affections upon black lovers, and black harlots, upon bits of dead creatures, and broken idols, upon this and that feckless[5] creature; and have not brought their love and their heart to Jesus. Oh, pity, that Fairness hath so few lovers! Oh, wo, wo to the fools of this world, who run by[6] Christ to other lovers! Oh, misery, misery, misery, that comeliness can scarce get three or four hearts in a town or country! Oh, that there is so much spoken, and so much written, and so much thought of creature vanity; and so little spoken, so little written, and so little thought, of my great and incomprehensible and never-enough wondered at Lord Jesus! Why should I not curse this forlorn, and wretched world, that suffereth my Lord Jesus to lye his lone?[7] O damned souls! O miskenning[8] world! O blind, O beggarly, and poor souls! O bewitched fools! what aileth you at Christ that you run so from him? I dare not challenge providence, that there are so few buyers, and so little sale for such an excellent one as Christ. Oh, the depth, and, oh, the height of my Lord's ways, that pass finding out! but oh, if[1] men would once be wise, and not fall so in love with their own hell, as to pass by Christ, and misken[9] him! But let us come near, and fill ourselves with Christ, and let his friends drink, and be drunken, and satisfy our hollow and deep desires with Jesus. Oh, come all and drink at this living well; come, drink and live for evermore; come, drink and welcome: "Welcome," saith our fairest Bridegroom: no man getteth Christ with ill will; no man cometh and is not welcome; no man cometh and rueth this voyage:[10] all men speak well of Christ who have been at him: men and angels who know him will say more than I dow do,[11] and think more of him than

1 Oh, that. 2 Empty. 3 Shallow. 4 Wasteful.
5 Worthless. 6 Past. 7 By himself alone. 8 Mistaking.
9 Not to recognize. 10 Journey. 11 Am able to do.

they can say. Oh, if [1] I were misted and bewildered in my Lord's love! Oh, if [1] I were fettered and chained to it! Oh, sweet pain to be pained for a sight of him! Oh, living death, oh, good death, oh, lovely death, to die for love of Jesus! Oh, that I should have a sore [2] heart, and a pained soul, for the want of the love of this and that idol! Wo, wo to the mistaking of my miscarrying heart, that gapeth and crieth for creatures, and is not pained, and cut, and tortured, and in sorrow for the want of a soul-fill [3] of Christ! Oh, that thou wouldst come near, my Beloved! O my fairest One, why standest thou afar! Come hither, that I may be satiated with thy excellent love. Oh, for a union! oh, for a fellowship with Jesus! Oh, that I could buy with a price that lovely One, even suppose that Hell's torments for a while were the price. I cannot believe but Christ will rue upon his pained lovers, and come and ease sick hearts, who sigh and swoon for want of Christ; who dow bide Christ's love to be nice? [4] What heaven can be there liker to Hell, than to lust, and green,[5] and dwine,[6] and fall aswoon [7] for Christ's love, and to want it? Is not this Hell and Heaven woven through other? [8] Is not this pain and joy, sweetness and sadness, to be in one web, the one the weft, the other the warp? therefore, I would that Christ would let us meet and join together, the soul and Christ in each other's arms. Oh, what meeting is like this, to see blackness and beauty, contemptibleness and glory, highness and baseness, even a soul and Christ kiss each other! Nay, but when all is done, I may be wearied in speaking and writing, but, oh, how far am I from the right expression of Christ or his love? I can neither speak nor write feeling, nor tasting, nor smelling: come feel, and smell, and taste Christ and his love, and ye shall call it more than can be spoken. To write how sweet the honeycomb is, is not so lovely as to eat and suck the honeycomb: one night's rest in a bed of love with Christ will say more than heart can think, or tongue can utter. Neither need we fear crosses, nor sigh, nor be sad for anything that is on this side of Heaven, if we have Christ. Our crosses will never draw blood of the joy of the Holy Ghost, and peace of conscience. Our joy is laid up in such a high place, as temptations cannot climb up to take it down. This world may boast [9] Christ, but they dare not strike; or if they strike they break their arm in fetching a stroke upon a rock. Oh, that we could put our treasures in Christ's hand, and give him our gold to keep, and our crown. Strive, mistress, to thring [10] through the thorns of this life, to be at Christ; tine [11] not sight of him, in this cloudy and dark day. Sleep with him in your heart in the night. Learn not at

[1] Oh, that. [2] Aching. [3] As much as will fill the soul.
[4] Who can be without Christ's love, while they yet long for it, and be in a desirable, happy frame.
[5] Most earnestly to desire, or long for. [6] Pine away. [7] Into a swoon.
[8] Promiscuously. [9] Threaten, with angry looks or words.
[10] To press through, as in a crowd or thicket. [11] Lose.

the world to serve Christ, but speer[1] at himself the way: the world is a false copy, and a lying guide to follow.

Remember my love to your husband: I wish all to him that I have written here. The sweet presence, the long-lasting good-will of our God, the warmly,[2] and lovely comforts of our Lord Jesus be with you. Help me, his prisoner, in your prayers; for I remember you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, August 8, 1637.

LETTER CCXXVII.

TO MY LORD CRAIGHALL.

My Lord,—I received one letter of your Lordship's from C., and another of late from A. B., wherein I find your Lordship in perplexity what to do. But let me entreat your Lordship not to cause yourself to mistake truth and Christ, because they seem to encounter with your peace and case. My Lord, remember that a prisoner hath written it to you, As the Lord liveth, if ye put to your hand with other apostates in this land, to pull down the sometime[3] beautiful Tabernacle of Christ in this land, and join hands with them in one hair-breadth to welcome Antichrist to Scotland, there is wrath gone out from the Lord against you and your house. If the terror of a king hath overtaken you, and your Lordship looketh to sleep in your nest in peace, and to take the nearest shore, there are many ways, too, too many ways, how to shift Christ with some ill-washen[4] and foul distinctions; but assure yourself, suppose a king should assure you that he would be your god, (as he shall never be for that piece of service,) that your clay-god shall die, and your carnal counsellors, when your conscience shall storm against you, and ye complain to them, will say, "What is that to us?" Believe not that Christ is weak, or that he is not able to save. Of two fires that ye cannot pass, take the least. Some few years will bring us all out in our blacks and whites before our Judge. Eternity is nearer to you than ye are aware of. To go in a course of defection, when an enlightened conscience is stirring, and looking you in the face, and crying within you, "That ye are going in an evil way," is a step to the sin against the Holy Ghost. Either many of this land are near that sin, or else I know not what it is. And if this, for which I now suffer, be not the way of peace and the King's highway to salvation, I believe there is not a way at all. There is not such breadth and elbow-room in the way to Heaven as men believe. Howbeit, this day be not Christ's, the morrow shall be his.

I believe assuredly that our Lord will repair the old waste places, and his ruined house in Scotland; and that this wilder-

[1] Inquire. [2] Warm. [3] Once. [4] Ill-washed.

ness shall yet blossom as the rose. My very worthy, and dear Lord, wait upon Him who hideth his face from the House of Jacob, and look for him. Wait patiently a little upon the Bridegroom's return again, that your soul may live, and that ye may rejoice with the Lord's inheritance. I dare pawn my soul and life for it, that if ye take this storm with borne-down Christ, your sky shall quickly clear, and your fair morning dawn. Think, (as the truth is,) that Christ is just now saying, "And will ye also leave me?" Ye have a fair occasion to gratify Christ now, if ye will stay with him, and want the night's sleep, with your suffering Saviour, one hour, now when Scotland hath fallen asleep, and leaveth Christ to fend for[1] himself. I profess myself but a weak, feeble man. When I came first to Christ's camp, I had nothing to maintain this war, or to bear me out in this encounter, and I am little better yet. But, since I find furniture, armor, and strength from the consecrated Captain, the Prince of our Salvation, who was perfected through suffering, I esteem suffering for Christ a king's life. I find that our wants qualify us for Christ; and, howbeit your Lordship write that ye despair to attain to such a communion and fellowship, (which I would not have you to think,) yet, would ye nobly and courageously venture to make over to Christ, for his honor now lying at the stake, your estate, place, and honor, he would lovingly and largely requite you, and give you a king's word for a recompense. Venture upon Christ's "Come," and I dare swear ye will say, (as it is in Psalm xvi. 7,) "I bless the Lord who gave me counsel." My very worthy Lord, many eyes in both the Kingdoms are upon you now, and the eye of our Lord is upon you. Acquit yourself manfully for Christ: spill[2] not this good play: subscribe a blank submission, and put it into Christ's hands: win, win the blessings and prayers of your sighing and sorrowful Mother-church seeking your help: win Christ's bond, (who is a king of his word,[3]) for a hundred-fold more even in this life.

If a weak man hath passed a promise to a king, to make a slip to Christ (if we look to flesh and blood, I wonder not of it: possibly I might have done worse myself,) add not further guiltiness to go on in such a scandalous and foul way. Remember that there is a wo, wo to him by whom offences come. This wo came out of Christ's mouth, and it is heavier than the wo of the Law. It is the Mediator's vengeance, and that is two vengeances to those who are enlightened. Free yourself from unlawful anguish, about advising and resolving. When the truth is come to your hand, hold it fast, go not again to make a new search and inquiry for truth. It is easy to cause conscience to believe as ye will, not as ye know; it is easy for you to cast your light into prison, and detain God's truth in unrighteousness—but that prisoner will break ward, to your incomparable torture. Fear

[1] Shift for. [2] Spoil.

[3] A Scottish phrase, expressive of one who has power to keep, and who always does keep, his word.

your light, and stand in awe of it; for it is from God. Think what honor it is in this life also to be enrolled to the succeeding ages amongst Christ's witnesses, standing against the re-entry of Antichrist. I know certainly that your light looking to two ways, and to the two sides, crieth shame upon the course that they would counsel you to follow. The way, that is halver and copartner with the smoke of this fat world, and with ease, smelleth strong of a foul and false way.

The Prince of peace, He who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of his sheep, by the blood of the Eternal Covenant, establish you, and give you sound light, and counsel you to follow Christ. Remember my obliged service to my Lord, your father, and mother, and your lady.

Grace be with you.

Your Lordship's,

At all obliged obedience in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, August 10, 1637.

LETTER CCXXVIII.

TO MR. JAMES FLEMING.

REVEREND, AND WELL-BELOVED IN OUR LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—I received your letter, which hath refreshed me in my bonds. I cannot but testify unto you, my dear brother, what sweetness I find in our Master's cross; but, alas, what can I either do or suffer for him! If I my lone[1] had as many lives as there have been drops of rain since the creation, I would think them too little for that lovely One, our Well-beloved; but my pain and my sorrow is above my sufferings, that I find not ways to set out the praises of his love to others. I am not able, by tongue, pen, or sufferings, to provoke many to fall in love with him: but He knoweth, whom I love to serve in the Spirit, what I would do, and suffer by his own strength, so being that I might make my Lord Jesus lovely and sweet to many thousands in this land. I think it amongst God's wonders, that he will take any praise or glory, or any testimony to his honorable cause, from such a forlorn sinner as I am; but when Christ worketh, he needeth not ask the question, by whom he will be glorious. I know, seeing his glory at the beginning did shine out of poor nothing, to set up such a fair house for men and angels, and so many glorious creatures, to proclaim his goodness, power and wisdom, that, if I were burnt to ashes, out of the smoke and powder of my dissolved body, he could raise glory to himself. His glory is his end: oh, that I could join with him, to make it my end! I would think that fellowship with him sweet and glorious. But alas! few know the guiltiness that is on my part: it is a wonder,

[1] Myself alone.

that this good cause hath not been marred and spilled[1] in my foul hands. But I rejoice in this, that my sweet Lord Jesus hath found something ado, even a ready market for his free grace, and incomparable and matchless mercy, in my wants; only my loathsome wretchedness and my wants have qualified me for Christ, and the riches of his glorious grace:—he behooved to take me for nothing, or else to want me. Few know the unseen and private reckonings betwixt Christ and me; yet his love, his boundless love would not bide away, nor stay at home with himself; and yet I dow not[2] make it welcome as I ought, when it is come unsent for and without hire.

How joyful is my heart that ye write that ye are desirous to join with me in praising, for it is a charity to help a dyvour[3] to pay his debts; but when all have helped me, my name shall stand in his account-book under ten thousand thousands of sums unpaid. But it easeth my heart that his dear servants will but speak of my debts to such a sweet Creditor. I desire that he may lay me in his own balance and weigh me, if I would not fain have a feast of his boundless love made to my own soul, and to many others. One thing I know, that we shall not all be able to come near his excellency with eye, heart, or tongue; for he is above all created thoughts. All nations before him are as nothing, and less than nothing: he sitteth in the circuit of Heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers before him. Oh, that men would praise him!

Ye complain of your private case: alas! I am not the man who can speak to such an one as ye are. Any sweet presence which I have had in this town, is, I know, for this cause, that I might express and make it known to others; but I never find myself nearer Christ, that royal and princely One, than after a great weight and sense of deadness and gracelessness. I think, that the sense of our wants, when withal we have a restlessness, and a sort of spiritual impatience under them, and can make a din, because we want Him whom our soul loveth, is that which maketh an open door to Christ; and, when we think we are going backward, because we feel deadness, we are going forward: for the more sense, the more life, and no sense argueth no life. There is no sweeter fellowship with Christ, than to bring our wounds and our sores to him. But for myself, I am ashamed of Christ's goodness and love, since the time of my bonds; for he hath been pleased to open up new treasures of love and felt sweetness, and give visitations of love and access to himself, in this strange land. I would think a fill of his love young and green heaven; and when he is pleased to come, and the tide is in, and the sea full, and the King and a poor prisoner together in the house-of-wine, the black tree of the cross is not so heavy as a feather. I cannot, I dow not, but give Christ an honorable and glorious testimony.

I see that the Lord can ride through his enemies' bands, and triumph in the sufferings of his own; and that this blind world

[1] Spoiled. [2] Am not able. [3] Bankrupt.

seeth not, that sufferings are Christ's armor, wherein he is victorious: and they who contend with Zion see not what he is doing, when they are set to work, as under-smiths and servants, to the work of refining of the saints, (Satan's hand also, by them, is at the melting of the Lord's vessels of mercy;) and their office in God's house is to scour and cleanse vessels for the King's table. I marvel not to see them triumph, and sit at ease in Zion; for our Father must lay up his rods, and keep them carefully for his own use: our Lord cannot want fire in his house; his furnace is in Zion, and his fire in Jerusalem: but little know the adversaries the counsel and the thoughts of the Lord.

And for your complaints of your ministry:—I now think all I do too little: plainness, freedom, watchfulness, fidelity, shall swell upon you, in exceeding large comforts, in your sufferings. The feeding of Christ's lambs in private visitations, and catechizing, in painful preaching, and fair, honest, and free warning of the flock, is a sufferer's garland. Oh, ten thousand times blessed are they, who are honored of Christ to be faithful and painful, in wooing a bride to Christ! My dear brother, I know that ye think more on this, than I can: and I rejoice that your purpose is, in the Lord's strength, to back your wronged Master; and to come out, and call yourself Christ's man, when so many are now denying him, as fearing that Christ cannot do[1] for himself and them. I am a lost man forever, or this, this is the way to salvation, even this way, which they call heresy, that men now do mock and scoff at. I am confirmed now, that Christ will accept of his servant's sufferings as good service to him, at the day of his appearance; and, that ere it be long he will be upon us all, and men in their blacks and whites shall be brought out before God, angels and men. Our Master is not far off; oh, if[2] we could wait on and be faithful! The good will of Him who dwelt in the bush, the tender favor and love, the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you.

Help me with your prayers; and desire, from me, other brethren, to take courage for their Master.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, August 15, 1637.

LETTER CCXXIX.

TO MR. HUGH MACKAIL.

My very dear Brother,—Ye know that men may take their sweet fill of the sour Law, in grace's ground; and betwixt the Mediator's breasts, and this is the sinner's safest way; for there is a bed for wearied sinners to rest them in, in the New Covenant, though no bed of Christ's making to sleep in. The Law

[1] Act. [2] Oh, that.

shall never be my doomster,[1] by Christ's grace; if I get no more good of it—I shall find a sore enough doom in the Gospel, to humble, and to cast me down—it is (I grant) a good rough friend, to follow a traitor to the bar, and to back[2] him, till he come to Christ. We may blame ourselves, who cause the Law to crave well-paid debt, to scare us away from Jesus, and dispute about a righteousness of our own, a world in the moon, a chimera, and a night-dream, that pride is father and mother to. There cannot be a more humble soul than a believer; it is no pride for a drowning man to catch hold of a rock.

I rejoice that the wheels of this confused world are rolled, and cogged,[3] and driven according as our Lord willeth. Out of whatever airth[4] the wind blow, it will blow us on our Lord. No wind can blow our sails overboard; because Christ's skill, and honor of his wisdom, are empawned and laid down at the stake for the sea-passengers, that he shall put them safe off his hand on the shore, in his Father's known bounds, our native home ground.

My dear brother, scaur[5] not at the cross of Christ; it is not seen yet what Christ will do for you, when it cometh to the worst: he will keep his grace, till ye be at a strait, and then bring forth the decreed birth for your salvation. Ye are an arrow of his own making, let him shoot you against a wall of brass, your point shall keep whole. I cannot, for multitude of letters, and distraction of friends, prepare what I would for the times: I have not one hour of spare time, suppose the day were forty hours long.

Remember me in prayer. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, September 5, 1637.

LETTER CCXXX.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE AND CHRISTIAN LADY, MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace, be to your Ladyship.—God be thanked ye are yet in possession of Christ, and that sweet child. I pray God that the former may be a sure heritage, and the latter a loan for your comfort, while ye do good to this poor, afflicted, withered Mount Zion. And who knoweth, but our Lord hath comforts laid up in store for her and you? I am persuaded, that Christ hath bought you past the Devil, and Hell, and sin, that they have no claim to you;—and that is a rich and invaluable mercy. Long since ye were half challenging death's cold kindness, in being so slow and sweer[6] to come to loose a tired prisoner: but ye stand in need of all the crosses, losses, changes, and sad

[1] One who pronounces sentence or doom. [2] To dog.

[3] To cog a wheel is to place a stone or piece of wood wedgewise between the ground and the wheel, to prevent it from moving.

[4] Quarter. [5] Boggle. [6] Reluctant, unwilling.

hearts that befell you since that time. Christ knoweth that the body of sin unsubdued will take them all, and more: we know that Paul had need of the Devil's service, to buffet him; and far more we. But, my dear, and honorable Lady, spend your sand-glass[1] well. I am sure that you have law to raise a suspension[2] against all that devils, men, friends, worlds, losses, hell, or sin can decree against you. It is good that your crosses will but convoy[3] you to Heaven's gates: in can they not go; the gates shall be closed upon them, when ye shall be admitted to the throne. Time standeth not still, eternity is hard at our door. Oh, what is laid up for you! therefore, harden your face against the wind: and the Lamb, your Husband, is making ready for you. The Bride-groom would fain have that day, as gladly as your Honor would wish to have it;—he hath not forgotten you.

I have heard a rumor of the Prelates' purpose to banish me: but let it come, if God so will; the other side of the sea is my Father's ground as well as this side. I owe bowing to God, but no servile bowing to crosses: I have been but too soft in that. I am comforted that I am persuaded fully that Christ is halfer[4] with me in this well-born and honest cross; and if he claim right to the best half of my troubles, (as I know he doth to the whole,) I shall remit over to Christ what I shall do in this case. I know certainly, that my Lord Jesus will not mar nor spill[5] my sufferings; he hath use for them in his house.

Oh, what it worketh on me,[6] to remember that a stranger, who cometh not in by the door, shall build hay and stubble upon the golden foundation which I laid amongst that people at Anwoth! But I know that Providence looketh not asquint, but looketh straight out, and through all men's darkness: oh, that I could wait upon the Lord! I had but one eye, one joy, one delight, even to preach Christ; and my Mother's sons were angry at me, and have put out the poor man's one eye, and what have I behind? I am sure that this sour world hath lost my heart deservedly, but, oh, that there were a days-man to lay his hands upon us both, and determine upon my part of it. Alas, that innocent and lovely truth should be sold! My tears are little worth, but yet for this thing I weep: I weep, alas, that my fair and lovely Lord Jesus should be miskent[7] in his own house! It reckoneth little of five hundred the like of me:—yet the water goeth not over faith's breath; yet our King liveth.

I write the prisoner's blessing: the good-will, and long-lasting kindness, with the comforts of the very God of peace be to your Ladyship, and to your sweet child. Grace, grace be with you.

Your Honor's,

At all obedience, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

1 Glass for measuring time.
2 To sue for the decision of a court to suspend the execution of a sentence or decree.
3 *To convoy*, to accompany part of the way. 4 Equal sharer. 5 Spoil, ruin.
6 What anxiety it causeth me. 7 Not known, not appreciated.

LETTER CCXXXI.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE MY LORD LINDSAY.

RIGHT HONORABLE, AND MY VERY GOOD LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Lordship.—Pardon my boldness to express myself to your Lordship at this so needful a time, when your wearied and friendless Mother-kirk[1] is looking round about her, to see if any of her sons doth really bemoan her desolation: therefore, my dear and worthy Lord, I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, pity that widow-like sister and spouse of Christ. I know that her Husband is not dead, but he seemeth to be in another country, and seeth well, and beholdeth who are his true and tender-hearted friends, who dare venture under the water to bring out to dry-land sinking truth, and who of the nobles will cast up[2] their arm, to ward a blow off the crowned head of our royal Lawgiver who reigneth in Zion, who will plead and contend for Jacob, in the day of his controversy.

It is now time, my worthy, and noble Lord, for you who are the little nurse-fathers (under our sovereign Prince) to put on courage for the Lord Jesus, and to take up a fallen orphan, speaking out of the dust, and to embrace in your arms Christ's bride. He hath no more in Scotland that is the delight of his eyes, than that one little sister, whose breasts were once well-fashioned. She once ravished her Well-beloved with her eyes, and overcame him with her beauty: "She looked forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, terrible as an army with banners: her stature was like the palm-tree, and her breasts like clusters of grapes, and she held the King in his galleries." (Cant. iv. 9, and vi. 10, and vii. 5, 7.) But now the crown is fallen from her head, and her gold waxed dim, and our white Nazarites are become black as the coal. Blessed are they who will come out and help Christ against the mighty! The shields of the earth and the nobles are debtors to Christ for their honor, and should bring their glory and honor to the New Jerusalem; (Rev. xxi. 24.) Alas, that great men should be so far from subjecting themselves to the sweet yoke of Christ, that they burst his bonds asunder, and think they dow not go on foot when Christ is on horseback, and that every nod of Christ, commanding as a king, is a load like a mountain of iron; and, therefore, they say, "This Man shall not reign over us; we must have another king than Christ in his own house." Therefore, kneel to Christ, and kiss the Son, an' let him have your Lordship's vote, as your alone[3] Lawgiver. I am sure that when you leave the old waste inn of this perishing life, and shall reckon with your host, and depart hence, and take shipping, and make over for eternity, which is the yonder side of time,—and a sand-

[1] Mother-church. [2] Throw up. [3] Only.

glass of three-score short years is running out,—to look over your shoulder, then, to that which ye have done, spoken, and suffered for Christ, his dear bride, (that he ransomed with that blood which is more precious than gold,) and for truth, and the freedom of Christ's Kingdom, your accounts will more sweetly smile and laugh upon you than if you had two worlds of gold to leave to your posterity. O my dear Lord, consider that our Master, eternity, and judgment, and the last reckoning, will be upon us in the twinkling of an eye. The blast of the Last Trumpet, now hard at hand, will cry down all acts of Parliament, all the determinations of pretended Assemblies, against Christ our Lawgiver. There will be shortly a proclamation by One standing in the clouds, that time shall be no more, and that courts with kings of clay shall be no more; and prisons, confinements, forfeitures of nobles, wrath of kings, hazard of lands, houses, and name, for Christ, shall be no more. This world's span-length of time is drawn now to less than half an inch, and to the point of the evening of the day of this old gray-haired world; and, therefore, be fixed and fast for Christ and his truth for a time; and fear not him whose life goeth out at his nostrils, who shall die as a man. I am persuaded Christ is responsal [1] and law-biding, to make recompense for anything that is hazarded or given out for him—losses for Christ are but our goods given out in bank in Christ's hand. Kings earthly are well-favored little clay gods, time's idols; but a sight of our invisible King shall decry and darken all the glory of this world. At the day of Christ, truth shall be truth, and not treason. Alas! it is pitiful that silence, when the thatch of our Lord's house hath taken fire, is now the flower and bloom of court and state wisdom; and to cast a covering over a good profession, (as if it blushed at light,) is thought a canny [2] and sure way through this life; but the safest way, I am persuaded, is to tine [3] and win with Christ, and to hazard fairly for him; for Heaven is but a company of noble venturers for Christ. I dare hazard my soul that Christ will grow green, and blossom like the Rose of Sharon yet in Scotland; howbeit now his leaf seemeth to wither, and his root to dry up.

Your noble ancestors have been enrolled among the worthies of this nation, as the sure friends of the Bridegroom, and valiant for Christ: I hope that you will follow on to come to the streets for the same Lord. The world is still at yea and nay with Christ. It shall be your glory, and the sure foundation of your house, (now when houses are tumbling down, and birds building their nests, and thorns and briers are growing up, where nobles did spread a table,) if you engage your estate and nobility for this noble King Jesus, with whom the created powers of the world are still in tops.[4] All the world shall fall before him, and, as God liveth! every arm lifted up to take the crown off his royal head, or that refuseth to hold it on his head, shall be broken from the shoulder blade. The eyes that behold Christ weep in sackcloth, and wallow in his blood, and will not help, even these eyes shall

[1] Responsible. [2] Prudent. [3] To lose. [4] In wrangling debate.

rot away in their eye-holes. Oh, if[1] ye and the nobles of this land saw the beauty of that world's wonder, Jesus our King, and the glory of Him who is angels' wonder, and Heaven's wonder for excellency! Oh, what would men count of clay estates, of time-eaten life, of worm-eaten and moth-eaten worldly glory, in comparison of that fairest, fairest of God's creation, the Son of the Father's delights. I have but small experience of suffering for him; but let my Judge and Witness in Heaven lay my soul in the balance of justice, if I find not a young heaven, and a little paradise of glorious comforts and soul-delighting love-kisses of Christ here beneath the moon, in suffering for him and his truth: and that the glory, joy, and peace, and fire of love, which I thought had been kept whill supper-time, when we shall get leisure to feast our fill upon Christ, I have felt in glorious beginnings in my bonds for this princely Lord Jesus. Oh! it is my sorrow, my daily pain, that men will not come and see. I would now be ashamed to believe that it should be possible for any soul to think that he could be a loser for Christ, suppose he should lend Christ the lordship of Lindsay, or some such great worldly estate. Therefore, my worthy, and dear Lord, set now your face against the opposites[2] of Jesus, and let your soul take courage to come under his banner, to appear as his soldier for him; and the blessings of a falling kirk, the prayers of the prisoners of hope who wait for Zion's joy, and the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush, and it burned not, shall be with you.

To his saving grace I recommend your Lordship and your House, and am still Christ's prisoner, and

Your Lordship's obliged servant,

In his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXXXII.

TO MY LORD BOYD.

My very honorable, and good Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am glad to hear that you, in the morning of your short day, mind Christ, and that you love the honor of his crown and kingdom. I beseech your Lordship to begin now to frame your love, and to cast it in no mould but one, that it may be for Christ only;—for when your love is now in the framing and making, it will take best with Christ. If any other than Jesus get a grip[3] of it, when it is green and young, Christ will be an unco[4] and strange world to you. Promise the lodging of your soul first away to Christ, and stand by your first covenant, and keep to Jesus, that he may find you honest. It is easy to master

[1] Oh, that. [2] Opponents. [3] Hold, gripe. [4] Cold.

an arrow, and to set it right, ere the string be drawn; but when once it is shot, and in the air, and the flight begun, then ye have no more power at all to command it. It were a blessed thing, if your love could now level only at Christ, that his fair face were the black of the mark ye shot at; for when your love is loosed, and out of your grips,[1] and in its motion to fetch home an idol, and hath taken a whorish gadding journey, to seek an unknown and strange lover, ye shall not then have power to call home the arrow, or to be master of your love—and ye will hardly give Christ what ye scarcely have yourself.

I speak not this, as if youth itself could fetch heaven and Christ. Believe it, my Lord, it is hardly credible what a nest of dangerous temptations youth is; how inconsiderate, foolish, proud, vain, heady, rash, profane, and careless of God, this piece of your life is; so that the Devil findeth in that age a garnished and well-swept house, and seven devils worse than himself, for then affections are on horseback, lofty, and stirring; then the old man hath blood, lust, much will, and little wit, and hands, feet, wanton eyes, profane ears, as his servants, and as kings' officers at command, to come and go at his will. Then a green conscience is as souple[2] as the twig of a young tree. It is for every way, every religion; every lewd course prevaileth with it: and, therefore, oh, what a sweet couple, what a glorious yoke are youth and grace, Christ and a young man! This is a meeting not to be found in every town. None who have been at Christ can bring back to your Lordship a report answerable to his worth; for Christ cannot be spoken of, or commended according to his worth. "Come and see," is the most faithful messenger to speak of him: little persuasion would prevail where this was. It is impossible in the setting out of Christ's love, to lie and pass over truth's line. The discourses of angels, or love-books written by the congregation of seraphim, (all their wits being conjoined and melted into one,) would forever be in the nether side of truth, and of plentifully declaring the thing as it is. The infiniteness, the boundlessness of that incomparable excellency that is in Jesus, is a great word. God send me, if it were but the relics and leavings, or an ounce weight or two, of his matchless love; and suppose I never got another heaven, (provided this blessed fire were evermore burning,) I could not but be happy forever. Come hither, then, and give out your money wisely for bread; come hither, and bestow your love.

I have cause to speak this, because except ye possess and enjoy Christ, ye will be a cold friend to his Spouse—for it is love to the husband that causeth kindness to the wife. I dare swear it were a blessing to your house, the honor of your honor, the flower of your credit, now in your place, and as far as ye are able, to lend your hand to your weeping mother, even your oppressed and spoiled mother-kirk. If ye love her, and bestir yourself for her, and hazard the lordship of Boyd for the recovery of her veil,

[1] Out of your own keeping. [2] Supple.

(which the smiting watchmen have taken from her,) then surely her husband will scorn to sleep in your common[1] or reverence. Bits of lordships are little to Him who hath many crowns on his head, and the kingdoms of the world in the hollow of his hand. Court, honor, glory, riches, stability of houses, favor of princes, are all on his finger ends. Oh, what glory were it to lend your honor to Christ, and to his Jerusalem. Ye are one of Zion's born sons; your honorable and Christian parents would venture you upon Christ's errands: therefore, I beseech you, by the mercies of God, by the death and wounds of Jesus, by the hope of your glorious inheritance, and by the comfort and hope of the joyful presence ye would have at the water-side, when ye are putting your foot in the dark grave, take courage for Christ's truth, and the honor of his free kingdom; for, howbeit ye be a young flower, and green before the sun, ye know not how soon death will cause you cast your bloom, and wither root, and branch, and leaves; and, therefore, write up what ye have to do for Christ, and make a treasure of good works, and begin in time. By appearance ye have the advantage of the brae;[2] see what ye can do for Christ, against these who are waiting whill Christ's Tabernacle fall, that they may run away with the boards thereof, and build their nests on Zion's ruins. They are blind who see not louns[3] now pulling up the stakes, and breaking the cords, and rending the curtains of Christ's, (sometimes,[4]) beautiful tent in this land. Antichrist is lifting that tent up upon his shoulders, and going away with it; and when Christ and the Gospel are out of Scotland, dream not that your houses shall thrive, and that it will go well with the nobles of the land. As the Lord liveth! the streams of your waters shall become pitch, and the dust of your land brimstone, and your land shall become burning pitch, and the owl and the raven shall dwell in your houses: and where your table stood, there shall grow briers and nettles, Isa. xxxiv. 9, 11. The Lord gave Christ and his Gospel as a pawn to Scotland. The watchmen have fallen foul, and lost their part of the pawn; and who seeth not, that God hath dried up their right eye, and their right arm, and hath broken the shepherds' staves, and that men are treading in their hearts upon such unsavory salt, that is good for nothing else. If ye, the nobles, put away the pawn also, and refuse to plead the controversy of Zion with the professed enemies of Jesus, ye have done with it. Oh! where is the courage and zeal now of the ancient nobles of this land, who with their swords, and hazard of life, honor, and houses, brought Christ to our hands? And now the nobles cannot be but guilty of shouldering out Christ, and of murdering the souls of their posterity, if they shall hide themselves, and lurk in the lee-side of the hill, till the wind blow down the temple of God. It goeth now under the name of wisdom, for men to cast their cloak over

[1] Under obligation to you.
[2] Slope, hill.
[3] Low, worthless fellows.
[4] Once.

Christ and their profession, as if Christ were stolen goods, and durst not be avouched. But though this be reputed a piece of policy, yet God esteemeth such men to be but state fools and court gowks,[1] whatever they, or other heads-of-wit[2] like to them, think of themselves, since their damnable silence is the ruin of Christ's kingdom. Oh, but it be true honor and glory to be the fast friends of the Bridegroom, and to own Christ's bleeding head, and his forsaken cause, and to contend legally, and in the wisdom of God, for our sweet Lord Jesus, and his kingly crown! But I will believe that your Lordship will take Christ's honor to heart, and be a man in the streets (as the prophet speaketh) for the Lord and his truth. To his rich grace and sweet presence, and the everlasting consolation of the promised Comforter, I recommend your Lordship, and am

Your Lordship's, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, September 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXXXIII.

TO HIS WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED FRIEND, FULK ELIES.

WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED IN OUR LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am glad of our more than paper acquaintance. Seeing we have one Father, it reckoneth the less, though we never saw one another's face. I profess myself most unworthy to follow the camp of such a worthy and renowned Captain as Christ. Oh, alas! I have cause to be grieved, that men expect anything of such a wretched man as I am. It is a wonder to me, if Christ can make anything of my noughty,[3] short, and narrow love to him; surely it is not worth the up-taking.

2. As for our lovely and beloved Church in Ireland, my heart bleedeth for her desolation; but I believe that our Lord is only lopping the vine-trees, but not intending to cut them down, or root them out. It is true, seeing we are heart-atheists by nature, and cannot take providence aright, (because we halt and crook[4] ever since we fell,) we dream of a halting providence; as if God's ellwand, whereby he measureth joy and sorrow to the sons of men, were crooked and unjust, because servants ride on horseback, and princes go on foot: but our Lord dealeth good and evil, and to some one portion, or to others of both, by ounce weights; and measureth them in a just and even balance. It is but folly to measure the Gospel by summer or winter weather—the summer-sun of the saints shineth not on them in this life. How should we have complained, if the Lord had turned the same providence that we now stomach at, upside down, and had ordered matters thus, that first the saints should have enjoyed Heaven, glory, and ease, and then Methuselah's days of sorrow and daily miseries?

[1] Boobies. [2] Wiseacres. [3] Having nothing in it. [4] Walk lamely.

We would think a short heaven no heaven; certainly his ways pass finding out.

3. Ye complain of the evil of heart-atheism: but it is to a greater atheist than any man can be, that ye write of that. Oh, light findeth not that reverence and fear which a plant of God's setting should find in our soul! How do we, by nature, as others, detain and hold captive the truth of God in unrighteousness, and so make God's light a bound prisoner? And even when the prisoner breaketh the jail, and cometh out in belief of a Godhead, and in some practice of holy obedience, how often do we, of new, lay hands on the prisoner, and put our light again in fetters? Certainly there cometh great mist and clouds from the lower part of our soul, our earthly affections, to the higher part, which is our conscience, either natural or renewed: a smoke in a lower house breaketh up, and defileth the house above. If we had more practice of obedience, we should have more sound light. I think, lay aside all other guiltiness, that this one, the violence done to God's candle, in our soul, were a sufficient dittay[1] against us. There is no helping of this but by striving to stand in awe of God's light. Lest light tell tales of us, we desire little to hear; but since it is not without God, that light sitteth neighbor to will, (a lawless lord,) no marvel that such a neighbor should leaven our judgment, and darken our light. I see there is a necessity that we protest against the doings of the Old Man, and raise up a party against our worst half, to accuse, condemn, sentence, and with sorrow bemoan the dominion of sin's kingdom; and withal make law, in the New Covenant, against our guiltiness; for Christ once condemned sin in the flesh, and we are to condemn it over again. And if there had not been such a thing as the grace of Jesus, I should have long since given up with Heaven, and with the expectation to see God. But grace, grace, free grace, the merits of Christ for nothing, white and fair, and large Saviour-mercy, (which is another sort of thing than creature-mercy, or Law mercy, yea, a thousand degrees above angel-mercy,) have been, and must be, the rock that we drowned souls must swim to. New washing, renewed application of purchased redemption, by that sacred blood that sealeth the free Covenant, is a thing of daily and hourly use to a poor sinner. Till we be in Heaven our issue of blood shall not be quite dried up; and, therefore, we must resolve to apply peace to our souls from the new and living way; and Jesus who cleanseth and cureth the leprous soul, lovely Jesus, must be our song on this side of Heaven's gates: and even when we have won the castle, then must we eternally sing, "Worthy, worthy is the Lamb, who hath saved us, and washed us in his own blood."

I would counsel all the ransomed ones to learn this song, and to drink and be drunk with the love of Jesus. O fairest, O highest, O loveliest One, open the well! Oh, water the burnt and withered travellers with this love of thine! I think it is possible

[1] Indictment.

on earth to build a young New Jerusalem, a little new heaven of this surpassing love. God, either send me more of this love, or take me quickly over the water, where I may be filled with his love. My softness cannot take with want. I profess I bear not hunger of Christ's love fair. I know not if I play foul play with Christ, but I would have a link of that chain of his providence mended, in pining and delaying the hungry on-waiters. For myself, I could wish that Christ would let out upon me more of that love. Yet to say Christ is a niggard to me, I dare not; and if I say I have abundance of his love, I should lie. I am half straitened [1] to complain, and cry, "Lord Jesus, hold thy hand no longer."

Worthy sir, let me have your prayers, in my bonds. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXXXIV.

TO JAMES LINDSAY.

Dear Brother,—The constant and daily observing of God's going alongst with you, in his coming, going, ebbing, flowing, embracing and kissing, glooming [2] and striking, giveth me, (a witless and lazy observer of the Lord's way and working) a heavy stroke. Could I keep sight of him, and know when I want, and carry as became me in that condition, I would bless my case.

But, 1. For desertions; I think them like lying lea [3] of lean and weak land for some years, whill it gather sap for a better crop. It is possible to gather gold, where it may be had, with moon-light. Oh, if I could but creep one foot, or half a foot, nearer in to Jesus, in such a dismal night as that, when he is away, I should think it an happy absence!

2. If I knew that the Beloved were only gone away for trial, and further humiliation, and not smoked out of the house with new provocations, I would forgive desertions, and hold my peace at his absence: but Christ's bought absence, (that I bought with my sin,) is two running boils at once, one upon each side; and what side then can I lie on?

3. I know that as night and shadows are good for flowers, and moon-light and dews are better than a continual sun, so is Christ's absence of special use, and that it hath some nourishing virtue in it, and giveth sap to humility, and putteth an edge on hunger, and furnisheth a fair field to faith to put forth itself, and to exercise its fingers in gripping [4] it seeth not what.

4. It is mercy's wonder, and grace's wonder, that Christ will lend a piece of the lodging, and a back chamber beside himself,

[1] Almost impelled. [2] Frowning. [3] Land in grass. [4] Catching.

to our lusts; and that he and such swine should keep house together in our soul. For suppose they couch and contract themselves into little room when Christ cometh in, and seem to lie as head under his feet, yet they often break out again; and that a foot of the Old Man, or a leg or arm nailed to Christ's cross, looseth the nail, or breaketh out again; and yet Christ, beside this unruly and misnurtured[1] neighbor, can still be making heaven in the saints, one way or other. May I not say, "Lord Jesus, what doest thou here?" Yet here he must be. But I will not lose my feet to go on into this depth and wonder; for free mercy, and infinite merits, took a lodging to Christ and us, beside such a loathsome guest as sin.

5. Sanctification and mortification of our lusts, are the hardest part of Christianity. It is, in a manner, as natural to us to leap when we see the New Jerusalem, as to laugh when we are tickled: joy is not under command, or at our nod, when Christ kisseth: but oh, how many of us would have Christ divided into two halves, that we might take the half of him only, and take his office, Jesus and Salvation! but "Lord" is a cumbersome word, and to obey and work out our own salvation, and to perfect holiness, is the cumbersome and stormy north side of Christ, and that which we eschew and shift.

6. For your question, the access that reprobates have to Christ, (which is none at all, for to the Father in Christ neither can they, nor will they come, because Christ died not for them; and yet, by law, God and justice overtaketh them,) I say, first, there are with you more worthy and learned than I am, Messrs. Dickson, Blair, and Hamilton, who can more fully satisfy you; but I shall speak in brief what I think of it, in these assertions. First, All God's justice toward man and angels floweth from an act of absolute, sovereign free-will of God, who is our Former and Potter, and we are but clay; for if he had forbidden to eat of the rest of the trees of the Garden of Eden, and commanded Adam to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, that command no doubt had been as just as this,—"Eat of all the trees, but not at all of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil." The reason is, because his will is before his justice, by order of nature, and what is his will is his justice, and he willeth not things without himself because they are just. God cannot, God needeth not hunt sanctity, holiness, or righteousness from things without himself, and so not from the actions of men or angels; because his will is essentially holy and just, and the prime rule of holiness and justice; as the fire is naturally light, and inclineth upward, and the earth heavy and inclineth downward. The second assertion then, that God saith to reprobates, "Believe in Christ, (who hath not died for your salvation,) and ye shall be saved," is just and right; because his eternal and essentially just will hath so enacted and decreed. Suppose natural reason speak against this, this is the deep and special mystery of the Gospel. God hath obliged, hard and fast, all the rep-

[1] Unsubdued by chastisement.

robates of the visible Church to believe this promise, "He that believeth shall be saved:" and yet in God's decree and secret intention, there is no salvation at all decreed and intended to reprobates; and yet the obligation of God, being from his sovereign free-will, is most just, as is said in the first assertion. Third assertion, The righteous Lord hath right over the reprobates and all reasonable creatures, that violate his commandments. This is easy. Fourth assertion, The faith that God seeketh of reprobates, is, that they rely upon Christ, as despairing of their own righteousness, leaning wholly and withal humbly, as weary and loaded, upon Christ, as on the Resting-stone laid in Zion. But he seeketh not that, without being weary of their sin, they rely upon Christ, as mankind's Saviour; for to rely on Christ, and not to be weary of sin, is presumption, not faith. Faith is ever neighbor to a contrite spirit; and it is impossible that faith can be, where there is not a cast down and contrite heart, in some measure, for sin. Now it is certain, that God commandeth no man to presume. Fifth assertion, Then reprobates are not absolutely obliged to believe that Christ died for them in particular; for, in truth, neither reprobates nor others are obliged to believe a lie; only they are obliged to believe that Christ died for them, if they be first weary, burdened, sin-sick, and condemned in their own consciences, and stricken dead and killed with the Law's sentence, and have indeed embraced him as offered, which is a second and subsequent act of faith, following after a coming to him, and a closing with him. Sixth assertion, Reprobates are not formally guilty of contempt of God, and misbelief,[1] because they apply not Christ and the promises of the Gospel to themselves in particular; for so they should be guilty, because they believe not a lie, which God never obliged them to believe. Seventh assertion, Justice hath a right to punish reprobates, because, out of pride of heart, confiding in their own righteousness, they rely not upon Christ, as a Saviour of all them that come to him. This God may justly oblige them unto; because in Adam they had perfect ability to do; and men are guilty because they love their own inability, and rest upon themselves, and refuse to deny their own righteousness, and to take them to Christ, in whom there is righteousness for wearied sinners. Eighth assertion, It is one thing to rely, lean, and rest upon Christ, in humility and weariness of spirit, and denying our own righteousness, believing him to be the only righteousness of wearied sinners; and it is another thing to believe that Christ died for me, John, Thomas, Anna, upon an intention and decree to save us by name. For, 1st, The first goeth first, the latter is always after in due order. 2ndly, The first is faith, the second is a fruit of faith; and, 3rdly, the first obligeth reprobates and all men in the Visible Kirk, the latter obligeth only the weary and laden, and so only the elect and effectually called of God. Ninth assertion, It is a vain order; "I know not if Christ died for me, John, Thomas, Anna, by name; and, therefore, I dare not rely on him." The reason is, because it is

[1] Wrong belief.

not faith, to believe God's intention and decree of election at the first, ere ye be wearied. Look first to your own intention and soul. If ye find sin a burden, and can, and do rest, under that burden, upon Christ; if this be once, now come and believe in particular, or rather apply by sense, (for, in my judgment, it is a fruit of belief, not belief,) and feeling the good-will, intention, and gracious purpose of God anent[1] your salvation. Hence, because there is malice in reprobates, and contempt of Christ, guilty they are, and justice hath law against them; and, which is the mystery, they cannot come up to Christ, because he died not for them; but their sin is, that they love their inability to come to Christ, and he who loveth his chains, deserveth chains.

And thus in short. Remember my bonds.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, September 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXXXV.

TO MY LORD CRAIGHALL.

My Lord,—I cannot expound your Lordship's contrary tides, and these temptations wherewith ye are assaulted, to be any other thing than Christ trying you, and saying unto you, "And will ye also leave me?" I am sure that Christ hath a great advantage against you, if ye play foul play to him, in that the Holy Spirit hath done his part, in evidencing to your conscience, that this is the way of Christ, wherein ye shall have peace; and the other, as sure as God liveth, is the Antichrist's way: therefore, as ye fear God, fear your light, and stand in awe of a convincing conscience. It is far better for your Lordship to keep your conscience, and to hazard in such an honorable cause your place, than wilfully, and against your light, to come under guiltiness. Kings cannot heal broken consciences; and when death and judgment shall comprise[2] your soul, your counsellors, and others, cannot become caution[3] to justice for you. Ere it be long, our Lord will put a final determination to acts of Parliament, and men's laws, and will clear you, before men and angels, of men's unjust sentences. Ye received honor, and place, and authority, and riches, and reputation from your Lord, to set forward and advance the liberties and freedom of Christ's Kingdom. Men, whose consciences are made of stoutness, think little of such matters, which, notwithstanding, encroach directly upon Christ's prerogative royal. So would men think it a light matter for Uzzah to put out his hand to hold the Lord's falling ark; but it cost him his life. And who doubteth, but a carnal friend will advise you to shut your window, and pray beneath your breath. "Ye make too great a din with your prayers;" so would a head-of-wit[4] speak, if he were in Daniel's place.

[1] Concerning.
[2] *To comprise*, legally to attach for debt.
[3] Security.
[4] Wiseacre.

But men's overgilded reasons will not help you, when your conscience is like to rive with a double charge. Alas, alas! when will this world learn to submit their wisdom to the wisdom of God? I am sure that your Lordship hath found the truth; go not then to search for it over again; for it is common for men to make doubts, when they have a mind to desert the truth. Kings are not their own men; their ways are in God's hand. I rejoice, and am glad, that ye resolve to walk with Christ, howbeit his court be thin. Grace be with your Lordship.

Your Lordship's,

In his sweet Master and Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, September 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXXXVI.

TO MR. JAMES HAMILTON.

Reverend and dear Brother,—Peace be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus.

I am laid low, when I remember what I am, and that my outside casteth such a lustre when I find so little within. It is a wonder that Christ's glory is not defiled, running through such an unclean and impure channel. But I see that Christ will be Christ, in the dreg and refuse of men. His art, his shining wisdom, his beauty, speak loudest in blackness, weakness, deadness, yea, in nothing. I see nothing, no money, no worth, no good, no life, no deserving, is the ground that Omnipotency delighteth to draw glory out of. Oh, how sweet is the inner side of the walls of Christ's house, and a room beside himself! My distance from him maketh me sad. Oh, that we were in other's arms! Oh, that the middle things betwixt us were removed! I find it a difficult matter to keep all stots[1] with Christ. When he laugheth, I scarce believe it, I would so fain have it true. But I am like a low[2] man looking up to a high mountain, whom weariness and fainting overcometh. I would climb up, but I find that I do not advance in my journey as I would wish; yet I trust that he will take me home against night. I marvel not that Antichrist in his slaves is so busy: but our crowned King seeth and beholdeth, and will arise for Zion's safety.

I am exceedingly distracted with letters, and company that visit me; what I can do, or time will permit, I shall not omit. Excuse my brevity, for I am straitened. Remember the Lord's prisoner: I desire to be mindful of you. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

[1] To keep pace with, to maintain equal ground with. *Stot* is the rebound of a ball.
[2] Short, not tall.

LETTER CCXXXVII.

TO THE LAIRD OF GAITGIRTH.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I can do no more than thank you on paper, and remember you to Him whom I serve, for kindness and care of a prisoner.

I bless the Lord, that the cause I suffer for, needeth not to blush before kings: Christ's white, honest, and fair truth needeth neither to wax pale for fear, nor to blush for shame. I bless the Lord, who hath graced you to own Christ now, when so many are afraid to profess him, and hide him, for fear they suffer loss by avouching him. Alas, that so many in these days are carried with the times! as if their conscience rolled upon oiled wheels, so do they go any way the wind bloweth them: and, because Christ is not market-sweet,[1] men put him away from them.

Worthy, and much honored sir, go on to own Christ, and his oppressed truth:—the end of sufferings for the Gospel, is rest and gladness. Light and joy are sown for the mourners in Zion, and the harvest, (which is of God's making, for time and manner,) is near: crosses have right and claim to Christ in his members, till legs and arms, and whole mystical Christ be in heaven. There will be rain, and hail, and storms, in the saints' clouds, ever-till God cleanse with fire the works of the creation, and till he burn the botch-house[2] of heaven and earth, that men's sins hath subjected unto vanity.

They are blessed who suffer and sin not, for suffering is the badge that Christ hath put upon his followers. Take what way we can to Heaven, the way is hedged up with crosses; there is no way but to break through them. Wit and wiles, shifts and laws, will not find out a way round the cross of Christ, but we must through. One thing, by experience, my Lord hath taught me, that the waters betwixt this and Heaven may all be ridden, if we be well horsed; I mean, if we be in Christ; and not one shall drown by the way, but such as love their own destruction. Oh, if we could wait on for a time, and believe in the dark the salvation of God! At least we are to believe good of Christ, till he gives us the slip, (which is impossible,) and to take his word for caution,[3] that he shall fill up all the blanks in his promises, and give us what we want; but to the unbeliever, Christ's testament is white, blank, unwritten paper.

Worthy, and dear sir, set your face to Heaven, and make you to stoop at all the low entries in the way, that ye may receive the Kingdom as a child. "Without this," He that knew the way, said, "there is no entry in." Oh, but Christ is willing to lead a poor sinner! Oh, what love my poor soul hath found in him, in

[1] Desirable, and, therefore, sought after in the open market.
[2] House that has been marred or botched; an allusion to the ruin which sin has brought upon the world.
[3] Security.

the house of my pilgrimage! Suppose that love in Heaven, and earth, were lost, I dare swear, it may be found in Christ.

Now the very God of peace establish you, till the day of the glorious appearance of Christ.

Your own, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXXXVIII.

TO THE LADY GAITGIRTH.

MUCH HONORED AND CHRISTIAN LADY,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I long to hear how it goeth with you and your children.

I exhort you not to lose breath, nor to faint in your journey. The way is not so long to your home as it was, it will wear to one step or an inch at length, and ye shall come ere long to be within your arm-length of the glorious crown. Your Lord Jesus did sweat and pant, ere he got up that mount; he was at, "Father, save me," with it. It was he who (Psalm xxii. 14,) said, "I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint" —Christ was as if they had broken him upon the wheel—"My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels." (Ver. 15.) "My strength is dried up like a potsherd." I am sure, ye love the way the better, that his holy feet trod it before you. Crosses have a smell of crossed and pained Christ. I believe that your Lord will not leave you to die your lone[1] in the way. I know that ye have sad hours, when the Comforter is hid under a veil, and when ye inquire for him, and find but a toom[2] nest. This, I grant, is but a cold good-day, when the seeker misseth Him whom the soul loveth; but even his unkindness is kind, his absence lovely, his mask a sweet sight, till God send Christ himself, in his own sweet presence. Make his sweet comforts your own, and be not strange, and shame-faced with Christ. Homely[3] dealing is best for him, it is his liking. When your winter storms are over, the summer of your Lord shall come; your sadness is with child of joy, he will do you good in the latter-end.

Take no heavier lift of your children than your Lord alloweth. Give them room beside your heart, but not in the yolk of your heart, where Christ should be; for then they are your idols, not your bairns. If your Lord take any of them home to his house, before the storm come on, take it well. The owner of the orchard may take down two or three apples off his own trees, before midsummer, and ere they get the harvest sun: and it would not be seemly that his servant, the gardener, should chide him for it. Let our Lord pluck his own fruit at any season he pleaseth; they are not lost to you, they are laid up so well, as that they are coffered in Heaven, where our Lord's best jewels lye. They are

[1] By yourself alone. [2] Empty. [3] Familiar.

all free goods that are there; death can have no law to arrest anything that is within the walls of the New Jerusalem.

All the saints, because of sin, are like old rusty horologes, that must be taken down, and the wheels scoured and mended, and set up again in better case than before. Sin hath rusted both soul and body; our dear Lord, by death, taketh us down to scour the wheels of both, and to purge us perfectly from the root and remainder of sin; and we shall be set up in better case than before. Then pluck up your heart; Heaven is yours, and that is a word which few can say.

Now, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and the very God of peace, confirm and establish you, to the day of the appearance of Christ our Lord.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXXXIX.

TO MR. MATTHEW MOWAT.

Reverend and dear Brother,—I am refreshed with your letters. I would take all well at my Lord's hands that he hath done, if I knew that I could do my Lord any service in my suffering; suppose my Lord would make a stop-hole [1] of me, to fill a hole in the wall of his house, or a pinning [2] in Zion's new work. For any place of trust in my Lord's house, as steward, or chamberlain, or the like, surely I think myself, (my very dear brother, I speak not by any proud figure or trope,) unworthy of it; nay, I am not worthy to stand behind the door; if my head, and feet, and body were half out, half in, in Christ's house, so that I saw the fair face of the Lord of the house, it would still my greening [3] and love-sick desires. When I hear that the men of God are at work, and speaking in the name of our Lord Jesus, I think myself but an outcast, or outlaw, chased from the city, to lye on the hills, and live amongst the rocks and out-fields. Oh, that I might but stand in Christ's out-house, or hold a candle in any low vault of his house! But I know this is but the vapors that arise out of a quarrelous and unbelieving heart to darken the wisdom of God. And your fault is just mine, that I cannot believe my Lord's bare and naked word. I must either have an apple to play me with, and shake hands with Christ, and have seal caution, [4] and witness to his word, or else I count myself loose; howbeit, I have the word and faith of a king. Oh, I am made of unbelief, and cannot swim but where my feet may touch the ground! Alas, Christ under my temptations is presented to me

[1] Anything to stop up a hole with.
[2] A small stone used in building to fill up the interstices between the larger stones.
[3] Longing with earnest desire.
[4] Security.

as lying waters, as a dyvour[1] and a cozener! We can make such a Christ, as temptations, casting us in a night-dream, do feign and devise; and temptations represent Christ ever unlike himself, and we in our folly listen to the Tempter.

If I could minister one saving word to any, how glad would my soul be! But I myself, which is the greatest evil, often mistake the cross of Christ; for I know if we had wisdom, and knew well that ease slayeth us fools, we would desire a market where we might barter or niffer[2] our lazy ease with a profitable cross; howbeit there be an outcast[3] natural betwixt our desires and tribulation. But some give a dear price and gold for physic, which they love not; and buy sickness, howbeit they wish rather to have been whole than to be sick.

But surely, brother, ye shall have my advice, (howbeit, alas! I cannot follow it myself,) not to contend with the honest and faithful Lord of the house; for, go he, or come he, he is aye gracious in his departure. There are grace, and mercy, and loving kindness upon Christ's back parts; and when he goeth away, the proportion of his face, the image of that fair Sun that stayeth in eyes, senses, and heart, after he is gone, leaveth a mass of love behind it in the heart. The sound of his knock at the door of his Beloved, after he is gone and passed, leaveth a share of joy and sorrow both: so we have something to feed upon till he return: and he is more loved in his departure, and after he is gone, than before; as the day in the declining of the sun, and towards the evening, is often most desired.

And as for Christ's cross, I never received evil of it, but what was of mine own making; when I miscooked Christ's physic, no marvel that it hurt me. For since it was on Christ's back, it hath always a sweet smell, and these 1600 years it keepeth the smell of Christ: nay, it is older than that too, for it is a long time since Abel first handseled the cross, and had it laid upon his shoulder; and down from him, all alongst to this very day, all the saints have known what it is. I am glad that Christ hath such a relation to this cross, and that it is called the cross of our Lord Jesus, (Gal. vi. 14,) his reproach, (Heb. xiii. 13,) as if Christ would claim it as his proper goods, and so it cometh into the reckoning among Christ's own property; if it were simple evil, as sin is, Christ, who is not the author nor owner of sin, would not own it.

I wonder at the enemies of Christ, (in whom malice hath run away with wisdom, and will is up, and wisdom down,) that they would essay to lift up the Stone laid in Zion. Surely it is not laid in such sinking ground as that they can raise it, or remove it: for when we are in their belly, and they have swallowed us down, they will be sick, and spue us out again. I know that Zion and her Husband cannot both sleep at once; I believe that our Lord once again will water with his dew the withered hill of Mount Zion in Scotland, and come down, and make a new marriage again, as he did long since. Remember our Covenant.

[1] Bankrupt. [2] Exchange. [3] Quarrel.

Your excuse for your advice to me is needless. Alas! many sit beside light, as sick folks beside meat, and cannot make use of it. Grace be with you.

Your brother in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXL.

TO MR. JOHN MEINE.

DEAR BROTHER,—I received your letter.—I cannot but testify under mine own hand, that Christ is still the longer the better, and that this time is the time of loves. When I have said all I can, others may begin and say that I have said nothing of him. I never knew Christ to ebb or flow, wax or wane; his winds turn not; when he seemeth to change, it is but we who turn our wrong side to him. I never had a plea[1] with him, in my hardest conflicts, but of mine own making. Oh, that I could live in peace and good neighborhood with such a second, and let him alone! My unbelief made many black lies, but my recantation to Christ is not worth the hearing. Surely he hath borne with strange gawds[2] in me: he knoweth my heart hath not natural wit to keep quarters with such a Saviour.

Ye do well to fear your backsliding. I had stood sure, if I had, in my youth, borrowed Christ to be my bottom; but he that beareth his own weight to Heaven, shall not fail to slip and sink. Ye had no need to be barefooted among the thorns of this apostate generation, lest a stob strike up[3] into your foot, and cause you to halt all your days. And think not that Christ will do with you in the matter of suffering, as the Pope doth in the matter of sin. Ye shall not find that Christ will sell a dispensation, or give a dyvour's[4] protection against crosses. Crosses are proclaimed as common accidents to all the saints, and in them standeth a part of our communion with Christ; but there lyeth a sweet casualty to the cross, even Christ's presence and his comforts, when they are sanctified.

Remember my love to your father and mother. Grace be with you.

Yours in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXLI.

TO JOHN FLEMING, BAILLIE OF LEITH.

MUCH HONORED IN THE LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am still in good terms with Christ; however my Lord's

[1] Quarrel
[2] Bad customs.
[3] A prick run up.
[4] Bankrupt's.

wind blow, I have the advantage of the calm and sunny side of Christ. Devils, and Hell, and Devil's servants, are all blown blind, in pursuing the Lord's little bride; they shall be as a night-dream, who fight against Mount Zion.

Worthy sir, I hope that ye take to heart the worth of your calling. This great fair and meeting of the people shall skail,[1] and the port is open for us. As fast as time weareth out, we flee[2] away: eternity is at our elbow. Oh, how blessed are they, who, in time, make Christ sure for themselves! Salvation is a great errand. I find it hard to fetch Heaven. Oh, that we would take pains on our lamps, for the Bridegroom's coming. The other side of this world shall be turned up incontinently, and up shall down, and those that are weeping in sackcloth will triumph on white horses, with Him whose name is the Word of God. Those dying idols, the fair creatures that we whorishly love better than our Creator, shall pass away like snow-water. The Godhead, the Godhead, a communion with God in Christ, to be halvers with Christ of the purchased house and inheritance in Heaven, should be our scope and aim.

For myself, when I lay my accounts, oh, what telling, oh, what weighing is in Christ! Oh, how soft are his kisses! Oh, love, love surpassing in Jesus! I have no fault to that love, but that it seemeth to deal niggardly with me; I have little of it. Oh, that I had Christ's seen and read bond, subscribed by himself, for my fill of it! What garland have I, or what crown, if I looked right on things, but Jesus? Oh, there is no room in us on this side of the water for that love! This narrow bit of earth, and these ebb[3] and narrow souls can hold little of it, because we are full of rifts. I would that glory, glory would enlarge us, (as it will,) and make us tight, and close up our seams and rifts, that we might be able to comprehend it, which yet is incomprehensible.

Remember my love to your wife. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXLII.

TO THE LADY ROWALLAN.

Madam,—Though not acquainted, I am bold in Christ to speak to your Ladyship on paper. I rejoice in our Lord Jesus, on your behalf, that it hath pleased Him whose love to you is as old as himself to manifest the savor of his love, in Christ Jesus, to your soul, in the revelation of his will and mind to you, now when so many are shut up in unbelief. Oh, the sweet change which ye have made, in leaving the black kingdom of this world and sin, and coming over to our Bridegroom's new Kingdom, to

[1] Disperse. [2] Fly. [3] Shallow.

know, and be taken with the love of the beautiful Son of God. I beseech you, madam, in the Lord, to make now sure work, and see that the old house be casten down, and razed from the foundation, and that the new building of your soul be of Christ's own laying; for then wind nor storm shall either loose it, or shake it asunder. Many now take Christ by guess; be sure that it be he, and only he, whom ye have met with: his sweet smell, his lovely voice, his fair face, his sweet working in the soul, will not lie; they will soon tell if it be Christ indeed—and I think that your love to the saints speaketh that it is he—and, therefore, I say, be sure that ye take Christ himself, and take him with his Father's blessing. His Father alloweth him well upon you; your lines are well fallen; it could not have been better, nor so well with you, if they had not fallen in these places: in Heaven or out of Heaven, there is nothing better, nothing so sweet and excellent as the thing ye have lighted on, and therefore hold you with Christ. Joy, much joy may ye have of him; but take his cross with him cheerfully. Christ and his cross are not separable in this life, howbeit Christ and his cross part at Heaven's door, for there is no house-room for crosses in Heaven. One tear, one sigh, one sad heart, one fear, one loss, one thought of trouble cannot find lodging there: they are but the marks of our Lord Jesus, down in this wide inn, and stormy country, on this side of death: sorrow and the saints are not married together; or suppose it were so, Heaven would make a divorce.

I find that his sweet presence eateth out the bitterness of sorrow and suffering. I think it a sweet thing, that Christ saith of my cross, "Half mine;" and that he divideth these sufferings with me, and taketh the larger share to himself; nay, that I and my whole cross are wholly Christ's. Oh, what a portion is Christ! Oh, that the saints would dig deeper in the treasures of his wisdom and excellency!

Thus recommending your Ladyship to the good-will and tender mercies of our Lord, I rest

Your Ladyship's, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, September 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXLIII.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

MUCH HONORED AND DEAREST IN OUR SWEET LORD JESUS, —Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus.

I know that the Lord will do for[1] your town. I hear that the Bishop is afraid to come amongst you: for so it is spoken in this town. And many now rejoice here to pen a supplication to the

[1] *To do for*, to act for.

Council, for bringing me home to my place, and for repairing other wrongs done in the country: and see if you can procure that three or four hundred in the country, noblemen, gentlemen, countrymen, and citizens subscribe it—the more the better. It may be that it will affright the Bishop, and, by law, no advantage can be taken against you for it. I have not time to write to Carlton and to Knockbrex; but I would you did speak to them in it, and let them advise with Carlton. Mr. A. thinketh well of it, and I think others will approve it.

I am still in good case with Christ, my court[1] is no less than it was, the door of the Bridegroom's house-of-wine is open, when such a poor stranger as I come athort.[2] I change, but Christ abideth still the same.

They have put out my one poor eye, my only joy, to preach Christ, and to go errands betwixt him and his bride. What my Lord will do with me, I know not; it is like that I shall not winter in Aberdeen, but where it shall be else, I know not. There are some blossomings of Christ's Kingdom in this town, and the smoke is rising, and the ministers are raging; but I love a rumbling and roaring devil best.

I beseech you in the Lord, my dear sister, to wait for the salvation of God. Slack not your hands in meeting to pray. Fear not flesh and blood: we have been all over-feared, and that gave louns[3] the confidence to shut me out of Galloway.

Remember my love to John Carsen, and Mr. John Brown. I never could get my love off that man; I think Christ hath something to do with him. Desire your husband from me, not to think ill of Christ for his Cross. Many misken[4] Christ, because he hath the cross on his back; but he will cause us all to laugh yet. I beseech you, as ye would do anything for me, to remember my Lady Marischall to God, and her son the Earl Marischall, especially her Christian daughter, my Lady Pitsligo.

I shall go to death with it, that Christ will return again to Scotland, with salvation in his wings, and to Galloway.

Grace be with you.

Yours in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, September 7, 1637.

LETTER CCXLIV.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

"And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."—ZECH. xii. 3.

WELL BELOVED SISTER,—I have been sparing to write to you, because I was heavy at the proceedings of our late Parliament.

[1] Favor.
[2] Across.
[3] Low, mean fellows.
[4] *To misken*, not to recognize.

Where law should have been, they would not give our Lord, Jesus, fair law and justice, nor the benefit of the house, to hear either the just grievances, or the humble supplications of the servants of God. Nothing resteth, but that we lay our grievances before our crowned King Jesus, who reigneth in Zion. And howbeit it be true, that the Acts of the Perth Assembly for conformity are established, and the King's power to impose the surplice, and other mass-apparel, upon ministers, be confirmed; yet what men conclude, is not scripture. Kings have short arms to overturn Christ's throne; and our Lord hath been walking and standing upon his feet at this Parliament, when fifteen earls and lords, and forty-four commissioners for burrows, with some barons, have voted for our kirk, in face of a King, who, with much awe and terror, with his own hand wrote up the voters for or against himself. Long before this Kirk, in the second Psalm, the ends of the earth, Scotland and England, were gifted of the Father to his Son Christ; and that is an old Act of Parliament decreed by our Lord, and printed four thousand years ago—their Acts are but yet printing. The first Act shall stand, let all the potentates of the world, who love Christ's room better than himself, rage as they please. Though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, yet there is a river that cometh out of the sanctuary, and the streams of it refresh the City of God. That well is not yet cried down in Scotland, nor can it dry up; therefore, still believe and trust in God's salvation. If you knew the whole proceedings, it is the Lord's mercy that matters have gone at our Parliament as they have gone. The Lord Jesus, in our King's ears, to his great provocation and grief, hath gotten many witnesses; and we saw in all, the Son of God overturning their policy, and making the world know how well he loveth his poor sun-burnt bride in Scotland—the Lord liveth, and blessed be the God of our salvation.

For the matter betwixt your husband and Carlton, I trust in God it shall be removed. It hath grieved me exceedingly. I have dealt with Carlton, and shall deal; put it off yourself upon the Lord, that it burden you not.

I have heard of your daughter's marriage: I pray the Lord Jesus to subscribe the contract, and to be at the banquet, as he was at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. Show her from me, that though it be true that God's children have prayed for her, yet the promise of God is made to her prayers and faith especially: and, therefore, I would entreat her to seek the Lord, to be at the wedding; let her give Christ the love of her virginity and espousals, and choose him first as her husband, and that match shall bless the other. It is a new world she entereth into, and, therefore, she hath need of new acquaintance with the Son of God, and of a renewing of her love to him, whose love is better than wine: 1 Cor. vii. 29, "The time is short, let the married be as though they were not married;" (ver. 30,) "They that weep, as though they weeped not; they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; they that buy, as though they possessed not;" (ver. 31,) "They that use this

world, as though they used it not: for the fashion of this world passeth away." Grace, grace be her portion from the Lord. I know that you have a care on you of it, that all be right: but let Christ bear all. You need not pity him, (if I may say so;) put him to it, he is strong enough.

The Spirit of the Lord Jesus be with you.

Your friend,

In his dearest Friend, Christ Jesus. S. R.

Aberdeen.

LETTER CCXLV.

TO MY LADY BOYD.

My very honorable, and Christian Lady,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter, and am well pleased that your thoughts of Christ stay with you, and that your purpose still is, by all means, to take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, which is no small conquest:—and it is a degree of watchfulness and thankfulness also, to observe sleepiness and unthankfulness. We have all good cause to complain of false light, that playeth the thief, and stealeth away the lantern. When it cometh to the practice of constant walking with God, our journey is ten times a day broken into ten pieces,—Christ getteth but only broken, and halfed,[1] and tired work of us, and alas! too often against the hair.[2]

I have been somewhat nearer the Bridegroom; but when I draw nigh, and see my vileness, for shame I would be out of his presence again; but yet, desire of his soul-refreshing love putteth blushing me under an arrest. Oh, what am I, so loathsome a burden of sin, to stand beside such a beautiful and holy Lord, such a high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity! But since it pleaseth Christ to condescend to such an one as I, let shamefacedness be laid aside, and lose itself in condescending love. I would heartily be content to keep a corner of the King's hall. Oh, if[3] I were at the yonder end of my weak desires! then should I be where Christ, my Lord and Lover, liveth and reigneth; there I should be everlastingly solaced with the sight of his face, and satisfied with the surpassing sweetness of his matchless love. But truly now I stand in the nether side of my desires, and with a drooping head, and panting heart, I look up to fair Jesus, standing afar off from us, whill[4] corruption and death shall scour and refine the body of clay, and rot out the bones of the Old Man of sin. In the mean time we are blessed in sending word to the Beloved, that we love to love him; and till then, there is joy in wooing, suiting,[5] lying about his house, looking in at the windows, and sending a poor soul's groans and wishes through a hole of the door to Jesus, till God send a glad

[1] Halved. [2] Against the grain. [3] Oh, that.
[4] Till. [5] Urging a suit.

meeting: and blessed be God, that after a low ebb, and so sad a word, "Lord Jesus, it is long since I saw thee," that even then, our wings are growing, and the absence of sweet Jesus breedeth a new fleece of desires and longings for him. I know that no man hath a velvet cross, but the cross is made of that which God will have it. But verily, howbeit, it be no warrantable market to buy a cross,[1] yet I dare not say, oh, that I had liberty to sell Christ's cross, lest, therewith, also, I should sell joy, comfort, sense of love, patience, and the kind visits of a Bridegroom: and, therefore, blessed be God, we get crosses unbought and good-cheap.[2] Sure I am, it were better to buy crosses for Christ, than to sell them: howbeit neither be allowed to us.

And for Christ's joyful coming and going, which your Ladyship speaketh of, I bear with it, as love can permit. It should be enough to me, if I were wise, that Christ will have joy and sorrow halvers of the life of the saints, and that each of them should have a share of our days: as the night and the day are kindly partners and halvers of time, and take it up betwixt them. But if sorrow be the greedier halver of our days here, I know that joy's day shall dawn, and do more than recompense all our sad hours. Let my Lord Jesus, (since he willeth to do so,) weave my bit and span-length of time with white and black, well and wo, with the Bridegroom's coming and his sad departure, as warp and woof in one web; and let the rose be neighbored with the thorn; yet hope that maketh not ashamed hath written a letter and lines of hope to the mourners in Zion, that it shall not be long so. When we are over the water, Christ shall cry down crosses, and up Heaven for evermore; and down Hell, and down death, and down sin, and down sorrow; and up glory, up life, up joy for evermore. In this hope, I sleep quietly in Christ's bosom whill[3] He come who is not slack; and would sleep so, were it not that the noise of the Devil, and of sin's feet, and the cries of an unbelieving heart awaken me:—but, for the present, I have nothing whereof I can accuse Christ's cross. Oh, if[4] I could please myself in Christ only.

I hope, madam, that your sons will improve their power for Jesus: for there is no danger, neither is there any question or justling betwixt Christ and authority, (though our enemies falsely state the question,) as if Christ and authority could not abide under one roof,—the question only is, betwixt Christ and men in authority. Authority is for and from Christ, and sib[5] to him; how then can he make a plea[6] with it? Nay, the truth is, worms and gods of clay are risen up against Christ. If the fruit of your Ladyship's womb be helpers of Christ, ye have good ground to rejoice in God.

All that your Ladyship can expect for your good-will to me, and my brother, (a wronged stranger for Christ,) is the prayers

[1] No one is entitled, by any act of his own, to bring a cross or trial, for its own sake, upon himself. [2] Gratuitously. [3] Till.
[4] Oh, that. [5] Related by blood, consanguineous. [6] Quarrel.

of a prisoner of Jesus, to whom I recommend your Ladyship, and your House and children: and in whom I am,

Madam, your Ladyship's in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 8, 1637.

LETTER CCXLVI.

TO MR. THOMAS GARVEN.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I rejoice that ye cannot be quit of Christ, (if I may speak so,) but that he must, he will have you. Betake yourself to Christ, my dear brother. It is a great business to make quit of superfluities, and of those things which Christ cannot dwell with. I am content with my own cross, that Christ hath made mine by an eternal lot, because it is Christ's and mine together. I marvel not, that winter is without Heaven; for there is no winter within it; all the saints, therefore, have their own measure of winter, before their eternal summer. Oh, for the long day, and the high sun, and the fair garden, and the King's great city up above these visible Heavens! What God layeth on let me suffer; for some have one cross, some seven, some ten, some half a cross: yet all the saints have whole and full joy, and seven crosses have seven joys. Christ is cumbered with me, (to speak so,) and my cross, but he falleth not off[1] me, we are not at variance. I find the very glooms[2] of Christ's wooing a soul sweet and lovely. I had rather have Christ's buffet and love-stroke, than another king's kiss;—speak evil of Christ who will, I hope to die with love-thoughts of him. Oh, that there are so few tongues in Heaven and earth to extol him! I wish his praises go not down amongst us. Let not Christ be low and lightly esteemed in the midst of us: but let all hearts and all tongues cast in their portion, and contribute something to make him great in Mount Zion.

Thus recommending you to his grace, and remembering my love to your wife and mother, and your kind brother R. B., and entreating you to remember my bonds, I rest,

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 8, 1637.

LETTER CCXLVII.

TO JONET KENNEDY.

Loving and dear Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter. I know that the savor of Christ in

[1] Doth not separate himself from me. [2] Frowns.

you, (whom the virgins love to follow,) cannot be blown away with winds, either from Hell, or the evil-smelled air of this polluted world. Sit far aback from the walls of this pest-house, even the pollutions of this defiling world. Keep your taste, your love, and hope in Heaven; it is not good that your love and your Lord should be in two sundry[1] countries. Up, up after your Lover, that ye and he may be together. A King from Heaven hath sent for you: by faith he showeth you the New Jerusalem, and taketh you alongst in the Spirit, through all the ease-rooms[2] and dwelling-houses in Heaven, and saith, "All these are thine; this palace is for thee and Christ;" and if ye only had been the chosen of God, Christ would have built that one house for you and himself; now it is for you and many others also. Take with you in your journey what ye may carry with you—your conscience, faith, hope, patience, meekness, goodness, brotherly kindness, for such wares as these are of great price in the high and new Country whither ye go. As for other things, which are but the world's vanity and trash, since they are but the house-sweepings, ye will do best not to carry them with you. Ye found them here, leave them here, and let them keep the house.

Your sun is well turned and low; be nigh your lodging against night. We go one and one out of this great market, till the town be empty, and the two-lodgings, Heaven and Hell, be filled. At length there will be nothing in the earth but toom[3] walls and burnt ashes, and therefore, it is best to make away. Antichrist and his Master are busy to plenish[4] Hell, and to seduce many: and Stars, great Church-lights, are falling from heaven, and many are misled and seduced, and make up with[5] their faith, and sell their birth-rights, by their hungry hunting for I know not what. Fasten your grips[6] fast upon Christ. I verily esteem him the best aught[7] that I have. He is my Second in prison. Having him, though my cross were as heavy as ten mountains of iron, when he putteth his sweet shoulder under me and it, my cross is but a feather. I please myself in the choice of Christ; he is my wale[8] in Heaven and earth. I rejoice that he is in Heaven before me. God send a joyful meeting: and, in the mean time, the traveller's charges for the way, I mean a burden of Christ's love, to sweeten the journey, and to encourage a breathless runner; for when I lose breath, climbing up the mountain, he maketh new breath.

Now the very God of peace establish you to the day of his appearance.

Yours, in his only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 9, 1637.

1 Separate.
2 Rooms for repose.
3 Empty.
4 To replenish.
5 Become content with.
6 Hold.
7 Possession.
8 Selection.

LETTER CCXLVIII.

TO MARGARET REID.

My very dear, and worthy Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Ye are truly blessed of the Lord, however a sour world gloom[1] upon you, if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. It is good that there is a heaven, and it is not a night-dream or a fancy. It is a wonder that men deny not that there is a heaven, as they deny there is a way to it, but of men's making. You have learned of Christ that there is a heaven; contend for it, and contend for Christ; bear well and submissively the hard cross of this step-mother world, that God will not have to be yours. I confess it is hard, and I would I were able to ease you of your burden: but believe me that this world, (which the Lord will not have to be yours,) is but the dross, the refuse, and scum of God's creation, the portion of the Lord's poor hired servants; the movables, not the heritage; a hard bone casten to the dogs, holden out of the New Jerusalem, whereupon they rather break their teeth than satisfy their appetite. It is your Father's blessing, and Christ's birth-right, that our Lord is keeping for you; and I persuade you that your seed, also, shall inherit the earth, (if that be good for them,) for that is promised to them; and God's bond is as good, and better, than if men would give every one of them a bond for a thousand thousands. Ere ye were born, crosses, in number, measure, and weight, were written for you, and your Lord will lead you through them: make Christ sure, and the blessings of the earth shall be at Christ's back. I see many professors for the fashion[2] follow on; but they are professors of glass: I would cause a little knock of persecution ding[3] them in twenty pieces, and so the world would laugh at the sherds. Therefore, make fast work. See that Christ lay the ground-stone[4] of your profession; for wind and rain, and spaits[5] will not wash away his building; his works have no shorter date than to stand for evermore. I should twenty times have perished in my affliction, if I had not leaned my weak back, and laid my pressing burden both upon the Stone, the Foundation-stone, the Corner-stone laid in Zion; and I desire never to rise off this stone.

Now, the very God of peace confirm and establish you unto the day of the blessed appearance of Christ Jesus. God be with you.

Yours, in his dearest Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen.

[1] Frown.
[2] For the sake of appearances.
[3] *To ding*—to knock, to drive.
[4] Foundation.
[5] Floods, deluges.

LETTER CCXLIX.

TO JAMES BAUTIE.

Loving Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—I received your letter, and render you thanks for the same; but I have not time to answer all the heads of it, as the bearer can inform you. First, Ye do well to take yourself at the right stot[1] when ye wrong Christ by doubting and misbelief;[2] for this is to nickname Christ, and term him a liar, which being spoken to our Prince, would be hanging or beheading; but Christ hangeth not always for treason. It is well that he may registrate a believer's bond a hundred times, and more than seven times a day have law against us, and yet he spareth us as a man doth his son that serveth him—no tender-hearted mother, who may have law to kill her sucking child, would put in execution that law.—2ndly, For your failings, even when ye have a set tryste[3] with Christ, and when ye have a fair, seen advantage, by keeping your appointment with him, and salvation cometh to the very passing of the seals, I would say two things:—1. Concluded and sealed salvation may go through and be ended, suppose you write your name to the tail of the Covenant with ink that can hardly be read—neither think I ever any man's salvation passed the seals, but there was an odd trick or slip, in less or more, upon the fool's part, who is infefted in Heaven. In the most grave and serious work of our salvation, I think Christ had ever good cause to laugh at our silliness, and to put on us his merits, that we might bear weight. 2. It is a sweet law of the New Covenant, and a privilege of the new burgh, that citizens pay according to their means: for the New Covenant saith not, so much obedience by ounce-weights, and no less, under the pain of damnation: Christ taketh as poor men may give; where there is a mean portion, he is content with the less, if there be sincerity: broken sums and little, feckless[4] obedience will be pardoned, and hold the foot[5] with him. Know ye not that our kindly Lord retaineth his good, old heart yet? He breaketh not a bruised reed, nor quencheth the smoking flax; if the wind but blow, he holdeth his hand about it till it rise to a flame. The law cometh on with three oyesses, with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the whole strength—and when would poor folks, like you and me, furnish all these sums? It feareth me, (nay, it is most certain,) that if the payment were to come out of our purse, when we should put our hand into our bag, we should bring out the wind, or worse: but the covenant

[1] Point. *Stot* means the rebound of a ball from the object against which it has been thrown.
[2] Weak faith.
[3] Fixed appointment to meet.
[4] Worthless.
[5] That is, be sustained, or allowed to pass.

seeketh not heap-mete,[1] nor stented obedience as the condition of it, because forgiveness hath always place. Hence I draw this conclusion; that to think matters betwixt Christ and us go back for want of heaped measure,[1] is a piece of old Adam's pride, who would either be at legal payment or nothing. We would still have God in our common,[2] and buy his kindness with our merits. For beggarly pride is devil's honesty, and blusheth to be in Christ's common,[2] and scarce giveth God a gramercy, and a lifted cap, (except it be the Pharisee's unlucky "God, I thank thee,") or a bowed knee to Christ. It will only give a "Good-day" for a "Good-day" again; and if he dissemble his kindness, as it were, in jest, and seem to misken[3] it, it, in earnest, spurneth with the heels, and snuffeth in the wind, and careth not much for Christ's kindness. "If he will not be friends, let him go," saith pride. Beware of this thief, when Christ offereth himself.—3rdly, No marvel then of whisperings, Whether you be in the Covenant or not? for pride maketh loose work of the Covenant of grace, and will not let Christ be full bargain-maker. To speak to you particularly and shortly:—1. All the truly regenerated cannot determinately tell you the measure of their dejections; because Christ beginneth young with many, and stealeth into their heart, ere they wit of themselves, and becometh homely[4] with them, with little din or noise. I grant that many are blinded, in rejoicing in a good-cheap[5] conversion, that never cost them a sick night; Christ's physic wrought in a dream upon them; but for that, I would say, if other marks be found that Christ is indeed come in, never make plea with him, because he will not answer, "Lord Jesus, how camest thou in?—whether in at door or window?" Make him welcome, since he is come. "The wind bloweth where it listeth" —all the world's wit cannot perfectly render a reason why the wind should be a month in the east, six weeks, possibly, in the west, and the space only of an afternoon in the south or north. Ye will not find out all the nicks[6] and steps of Christ's way with a soul, do what ye can; for sometimes he will come in stepping softly, like one walking beside a sleeping person, and slip-to the door, and let none know he is there. 2. Ye object, The truly regenerate should love God for himself; and ye fear that ye love him more for his benefits, (as incitements and motives to love him,) than for himself. I answer, To love God for himself, as the last end, and also for his benefits, as incitements and motives to love him, may stand well together; as a son loveth his mother, because she is his mother, howbeit she be poor; and he loveth her for an apple also. I hope ye will not say, that benefits are the only reason and bottom of your love; it seemeth there is a better foundation for it; always,[7] if a hole be in it, sew it up

[1] Heaped measure. By the ancient Scottish laws and customs, many kinds of grain, &c., were required to be heaped in the measure, in order to render the quantity legal.
[2] Under obligation to.
[3] *To misken*, not to know.
[4] Familiar.
[5] Gratuitous.
[6] Notches, marks.
[7] Although, however, like *toutes-fois*, in French.

shortly.[1] 3. Ye feel not such mourning in Christ's absence as ye would. I answer, That the regenerate mourn at all times, and all in like measure for his absence, I deny. There are different degrees of mourning, less or more, as they have less or more love to him, and less or more sense of his absence. But, 1. Some they must have. 2. Sometimes they miss not the Lord, and then they cannot mourn; howbeit, it is not long so; at least, it is not always so. 3. Ye challenge yourself that some truths find more credit with you than others. Ye do well, for God is true in the least, as well as in the greatest, and he must be so to you. Ye must not call him true in the one page of the leaf, and false in the other; for our Lord, in all his writings, never contradicted himself yet. Although the best of the regenerate have slipped here, always labor ye to hold your feet.—4thly, Comparing the state of one truly regenerate, whose heart is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and yours, which is full of uncleanness and corruption, ye stand dumb and discouraged, and dare not sometimes call Christ heartsomely[2] your own. I answer, The best regenerate have their defilements, and, if I may speak so, their draff-poke,[3] that will clog behind them all their days; and, wash as they will, there will be filth in their bosom—but let not this put you from the well. 2. I answer, Albeit there be some ounce-weights of carnality, and some squint look, or eye in our neck to an idol, yet love in its own measure may be found; for glory must purify and perfect our love; it will never till then be absolutely pure. Yet, if the idol reign, and have the whole of the heart, and the keys of the house, and Christ only be made an underling to run errands, all is not right; therefore, examine well. 3. There is a two-fold discouragement; one of unbelief, to conclude, and make doubt of the conclusion, for a mote in your eye, and a by-look[4] to an idol; this is ill: there is another discouragement of sorrow for sin, when ye find a by-look[4] to an idol; this is good, and matter of thanksgiving; therefore, examine here also.—5thly, The assurance of Jesus's love, ye say, would be the most comfortable news that ever ye heard. Answer, That may stop twenty holes, and loose many objections. That love hath telling in it, I trow. Oh, that ye knew and felt it, as I have done! I wish you a share of my feast; sweet, sweet, hath it been to me. If my Lord had not given me this love, I should have fallen through the causeway of Aberdeen ere now! But for you, hing on,[5] your feast is not far off; ye shall be filled ere ye go; there is as much in our Lord's pantry as will satisfy all his bairns, and as much wine in his cellar as will quench all their thirst. Hunger on, for there is meat in hunger for Christ. Never go from him, but fash[6] him, (who yet is pleased with the importunity of hungry souls,) with a dish-full of hungry desires, till he

[1] Immediately. [2] Cordially.

[3] Literally, a sack for carrying *draff*, that is, the refuse of malt which has been brewed; metaphorically, moral imperfection, as in the Scottish proverb, "Ilka man has his ain draff-poke,"—every one has his own peculiar failing.

[4] A look askance. [5] *To hing on*, to wait with patience.

[6] Trouble, pester, annoy.

fill you; and if he delay, yet come not ye away, albeit ye should fall aswoon[1] at his feet.—6thly, Ye crave my mind, whether sound comfort may be found in prayer, when conviction of a known idol is present. I answer, An idol, as an idol, cannot stand with sound comforts; for that comfort that is gotten at Dagon's feet is a cheat or blaflum;[2] yet sound comfort, and conviction of an eye to an idol, may as well dwell together as tears and joy. But let this do you no ill; I speak it for your encouragement, that ye may make the best out of your joys ye can, albeit you find them mixed with motes. 2. Conviction, if alone, without remorse and grief, is not enough; therefore, lend it a tear if ye dow win at[3] it.—7thly, Ye question, when ye win[4] to more fervency sometimes with your neighbor in prayer, than when you are alone, whether hypocrisy be in it or not? I answer, If this be always, no question a spice of hypocrisy is in it, which should be taken heed to; but possibly desertion may be in private, and presence in public, and then the case is clear.—8thly, A fit of applause may occasion, by accident, a rubbing of a cold heart, and so heat and life may come; but it is not the proper cause of that heat; hence God, of his free grace, will ride his errands upon our stinking corruption; but corruption is but a mere occasion and accident, as the playing on a pipe removed anger from the prophet, and, made him fitter to prophesy, (2 Kings iii. 15.)—9thly, Ye complain of Christ's short visits, that he will not bear you company one night; but when ye lye down warm at night, ye rise cold at morning. Answer, I cannot blame you, (nor any other, that knoweth that sweet Guest,) to bemoan his withdrawings, and to be most desirous of his abode and company; for he would captivate and engage the affection of any creature that saw his face. Since he looked on me, and gave me a sight of his fair love, he gained my heart wholly, and got away with it; well, well may he brook[5] it; he shall keep it long, ere I fetch it from him. But I shall tell you what ye should do. Treat him well, give him the chair and the board-head,[6] and make him welcome to the mean portion ye have; a good supper and kind entertainment maketh the guests love the inn the better. Yet sometimes Christ hath an errand elsewhere, for mere trial; and then, though ye give him king's cheer, he will away; as is clear in desertions for mere trial, and not for sin.—10thly, Ye seek the difference betwixt the motions of the Spirit, in their least measure, and the natural joys of your own heart. Answer, As a man can tell, if he joy and delight in his wife, as his wife; or if he delight and joy in her for satisfaction of his lust, but hating her person, and so loving her for her flesh, and not grieving when ill befalleth her; so will a man's joy in God, and his whorish natural joy, be discovered; if he sorry for anything that may offend the Lord, it will speak the singleness of his love to him.—11thly, Ye ask the reason why

1 Into a swoon.
2 An illusion.
3 That is, are able to attain to.
4 Attain.
5 *To brook*, to enjoy.
6 Head of the table.

sense overcometh faith. Answer, Because sense is more natural, and near of kin to our selfish and soft nature. Ye ask, If faith, in that case, be sound? Answer, If it be chased away, it is neither sound nor unsound, because it is not faith; but it might be, and was faith, before sense did blow out the act of believing.—Lastly, Ye ask what to do, when promises are borne-in[1] upon you, and sense of impenitency, for sins of youth, hindereth application. I answer, If it be living sense, it may stand with application; and in this case, put to your hand,[2] and eat your meat in God's name: if false, so that the sins of youth are not repented of, then, as faith and impenitency cannot stand together, so neither that sense and application can consist.

Brother, excuse my brevity, for time straiteneth me, that I get not my mind said in these things, but must refer that to a new occasion, if God offer it. Brother, pray for me. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his dearest Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCL.

TO JOHN STUART, PROVOST OF AYR, NOW IN IRELAND.

Much honored Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you. —I long to hear from you, being now removed from my flock, and the prisoner of Christ at Aberdeen. I would not have you to think it strange, that your journey to New England hath gotten such a dash: it indeed hath made my heart heavy; yet I know it is no dumb providence, but a speaking one, whereby our Lord speaketh his mind to you, though for the present ye do not well understand what he saith: however it be, he who sitteth upon the floods, hath shown you his marvellous kindness in the great depths. I know that your loss is great, and your hope gone against you; but I entreat you, sir, expound aright our Lord's laying all hindrances in the way. I persuade myself that your heart aimeth at the footsteps of the flock, to feed beside the shepherd's tents, and to dwell beside Him whom your soul loveth; and that it is your desire to remain in the wilderness, where the Woman is kept from the Dragon: and this being your desire, remember that a poor prisoner of Christ said it to you, that that miscarried journey is with child to you of mercy and consolation, and shall bring forth a fair birth, on which the Lord will attend in his own way. Wait on; "He that believeth maketh not haste," (Isaiah xxviii. 16.)

I hope that ye have been asking what the Lord meaneth, and what further may be his will, in reference to your return. My dear brother, let God make of you what he will, he will end all with consolation, and will make glory out of your sufferings;—and

[1] Impressed upon the mind. [2] That is, stretch out your hand to the food.

would you wish better work? This water was in your way to Heaven, and written in your Lord's book; ye behooved to cross it, and, therefore, kiss his wise and unerring providence. Let not the censures of men, who see but the outside of things, and scarce well that, abate your courage and rejoicing in the Lord; howbeit your faith seeth but the black side of providence, yet it hath a better side, and God will let you see it. Learn to believe Christ better than his strokes, himself and his promises better than his glooms :[1] dashes and disappointments are not canonical scripture; fighting for the promised land, seemed to cry to God's promise, "Thou liest." If our Lord ride upon a straw, his horse shall neither stumble nor fall, (Rom. viii. 28,) "For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God;" *ergo*, shipwreck, losses, &c. work together for the good of them that love God. Hence I infer, that losses, disappointments, ill tongues, loss of friends, houses, or country are God's workmen, set on work to work out good to you, out of everything that befalleth you. Let not the Lord's dealing seem harsh, rough, or unfatherly, because it is unpleasant. When the Lord's blessed will bloweth across your desires, it is best in humility, to strike sail to him, and to be willing to be led any way our Lord pleaseth. It is a point of denial of yourself, to be as if ye had not a will, but had made a free disposal of it to God, and had sold it over to him; and to make use of his will for your own, is both true holiness, and your ease and peace: ye know not what the Lord is working out of this, but ye shall know it hereafter.

And what I write to you, I write to your wife. I compassionate her case, but entreat her not to fear nor faint. This journey is a part of her wilderness to Heaven and the Promised Land, and there are fewer miles behind; it is nearer the dawning of the day to her than when she went out of Scotland. I should be glad to hear that ye and she have comfort and courage in the Lord.

Now, as concerning our Kirk, our Service-book[2] is ordained, by open proclamation and sound of trumpet to be read in all the kirks of this kingdom. Our prelates are to meet this month for it and our Canons, and for a reconciliation betwixt us and the Lutherans. The Professors of Aberdeen University are charged to draw up the articles of an Uniform Confession; but reconciliation with Popery is intended. This is the day of Jacob's visitation; the ways of Zion mourn, our gold is become dim, the sun is gone down upon our prophets. A dry wind, but neither to fan nor to cleanse, is coming upon this land, and all our ill is coming from the multiplied transgressions of this land, and from the friends and lovers of Babel among us,—(Jer. li. 35,) "The violence done to me, and to my flesh be upon thee, Babylon, shall the inhabitants of Zion say; and, my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say."

Now for myself; I was three days before the High Commission, and accused of treason preached against our King. A minister

[1] Frowns. [2] Book of Common Prayer.

being witness, went well nigh to swear it. God hath saved me from their malice. 1st, They have deprived me of my ministry; 2dly, Silenced me, that I exorcise no part of the ministerial function within this kingdom, under the pain of rebellion; 3dly, Confined my person within the town of Aberdeen, where I find the ministers working for my confinement in Caithness or Orkney, far from them, because some people here, (willing to be edified,) resort to me. At my first entry, I had heavy challenges[1] within me, and a court fenced[2] (but I hope not in Christ's name,) wherein it was asserted, that my Lord would have no more of my service, and was tired of me: and, like a fool, I summoned Christ also for unkindness; my soul fainted, and I refused comfort, and said, "What ailed Christ at me? for I desired to be faithful in his house." Thus in my rovings and mistakings, my Lord Jesus bestowed mercy on me, who am less than the least of all saints. I lay upon the dust, and bought a plea from Satan[3] against Christ, and he was content to sell it. But at length Christ did show himself friends with me, and in mercy pardoned and passed my part of it, and only complained that a court should be holden in his bounds, without his own allowance. Now I pass from my compearance;[4] and, as if Christ had done the fault, he hath made the mends[5] and returned to my soul; so that now his poor prisoner feedeth on the feasts of love. My adversaries know not what a courtier I am now with my Royal King, for whose crown I now suffer. It is but our soft and lazy flesh that hath raised an ill report of the cross of Christ. Oh, sweet, sweet is his yoke! Christ's chains are of pure gold; sufferings for him are perfumed; I would not give my weeping for the laughing of all the Fourteen Prelates; I would not exchange my sadness with the world's joy. O lovely, lovely Jesus, how sweet must thy kisses be, when thy cross smelleth so sweetly! Oh, if[6] all the Three Kingdoms had part of my love-feast, and of the comfort of a dawted[7] prisoner!

Dear brother, I charge you to praise for me, and to seek help of our acquaintance there, to help me to praise. Why should I smother Christ's honesty to me! My heart is taken up with this, that my silence and sufferings may preach. I beseech you in the bowels of Christ, to help me to praise. Remember my love to your wife, to Mr. Blair, and Mr. Livingston, and Mr. Cunningham. Let me hear from you, for I am anxious what to do: if I saw a call for New England, I would follow it. Grace be with you.

Yours in our Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

[1] Self-accusations. [2] Constituted.

[3] That is, hired Satan, by my own repining, to give me some cause or ground of controversy with Christ.

[4] Appearance in obedience to legal citation. [5] Made amends.

[6] That. [7] Much made of.

LETTER CCLI.

TO JOHN STUART, PROVOST OF AYR.

MUCH HONORED, AND DEAREST IN CHRIST,—Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, be upon you.

I expected the comfort of a letter to a prisoner from you, ere now. I am here, sir, putting off a part of my inch of time; and when I awake first in the morning, (which is always with great heaviness and sadness), this question is brought to my mind—"Am I serving God or not?" Not that I doubt of the truth of this honorable cause wherein I am engaged—I dare venture into eternity, and before my Judge, that I now suffer for the truth; because that I cannot endure that my Master, who is a freeborn King, should pay tribute to any of the shields or potsherds of the earth: oh, that I could hold the crown upon my princely King's head with my sinful arm, howbeit it should be struck from me, in that service, from the shoulder-blade,—but my closed mouth, my dumb Sabbaths, the memory of my communion with Christ, in many fair, fair days in Anwoth, (whereas now my Master getteth no service of my tongue as then,) hath almost broken my faith in two halves: yet in my deepest apprehensions of his anger, I see through a cloud that I am wrong; and he, in love to my soul, hath taken up the controversy betwixt faith and apprehensions, and a decreet[1] is passed on Christ's side of it, and I subscribe the decreet.[1] The Lord is equal in his ways, but my guiltiness often overmastereth my believing. I have not been well known: for except as to open outbreakings, I want nothing of what Judas and Cain had; only he hath been pleased to prevent me in mercy, and to cast me into a fever of love for himself, and his absence maketh my fever most painful; and beside he hath visited my soul and watered it with his comforts:—but yet I have not what I would; the want of real and felt possession is my only death. I know that Christ pitieth me in this.

The great men, my friends, that did[2] for me, are dried up, like winter-brooks of water. All say, "No dealing for that man; his best will be, to be gone out of the kingdom." So I see they tire of me: but, believe me, I am most gladly content that Christ breaketh all my idols in pieces: it hath put a new edge upon my blunted love to Christ; I see that he is jealous of my love, and will have all to himself. In a word, these six things are my burden: 1. I am not in the vineyard as others are, it may be, because Christ thinketh me a withered tree, not worth its room—but God forbid! 2. Wo, wo, wo is coming upon my Harlot-mother, this apostate Kirk! The time is coming when we shall wish for doves' wings, to flee and hide us. Oh, for the desolation of this

[1] Sentence of a court. [2] Acted.

land! 3. I see my dear Master, Christ, going his lone,[1] (as it were,) mourning in sackcloth. His fainting friends fear that King Jesus shall lose the field: but he must carry the day. 4. My guiltiness and the sins of youth are come up against me, and they would come into the plea in my sufferings, as deserving causes in God's justice; but I pray God, for Christ's sake, that he may never give them that room. Wo is me, that I cannot get my royal, dreadful, mighty, and glorious Prince of the kings of the earth set on high. Sir, ye may help me and pity me in this, and bow your knee, and bless his name, and desire others to do it, that he hath been pleased in my sufferings to make Atheists, Papists, and enemies about me, say, "It is like that God is with this prisoner." Let Hell and the powers of Hell, (I care not,) be let loose against me to do their worst, so being that Christ, and my Father and his Father be magnified in my sufferings. 5. Christ's love hath pained me; for howbeit his presence hath shamed me, and drowned me in debt, yet he often goeth away when my love to him is burning. He seemeth to look like a proud wooer, who will not look upon a poor match, that is dying of love. I will not say he is lordly: but I know he is wise in hiding himself from a child and a fool, who maketh an idol and a god of one of Christ's kisses, which is idolatry. I fear that I adore his comforts more than himself, and that I love the apples of life better than the Tree of life.

Sir, write to me. Commend me to your wife. Mercy be her portion. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his dearest Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLII.

TO JOHN STUART, PROVOST OF AYR.

Worthy, and dearly beloved in our Lord, — Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I was refreshed and comforted with your letter. What I wrote to you, for your comfort, I do not remember; but I believe, that love will prophesy homeward, as it would have it. I wish that I could help you to praise His great and holy name who keepeth the feet of his saints, and hath numbered all your goings. I know that our dearest Lord will pardon and pass by our honest errors and mistakes, when we mind his honor: yet I know that none of you have seen the other half and the hidden side of your wonderful return home to us again. I am confident ye shall yet say, that God's mercy blew your sails back to Ireland again.

Worthy, and dear sir, I cannot but give you an account of my present estate, that ye may go an errand for me to my high and royal Master, of whom I boast all the day. I am as proud of his

[1] By himself alone.

love, (nay, I bless myself, and boast more of my present lot,) as any poor man can be of an earthly king's court, or of a kingdom. First, I am very often turning both the sides of my cross, especially my dumb and silent Sabbaths; not because I desire to find a cross or defect in my Lord's love, but because my love is sick with fancies and fear. Whether or not the Lord hath a process leading against my guiltiness, that I have not yet well seen, I know not. My desire is to ride fair, and not to spark dirt,[1] (if, with reverence to him, I may be permitted to make use of such a word,) in the face of my only Well-beloved; but fear of guiltiness is a tale-bearer betwixt me and Christ, and is still whispering ill tales of my Lord, to weaken my faith. I had rather that a cloud went over my comforts by these messages, than that my faith should be hurt: for, if my Lord get no wrong by me, verily I desire grace, not to care what become of me. I desire to give no faith, nor credit to my sorrow, that can make a lie of my best friend Christ. Wo, wo be to them all! who speak ill of Christ. Hence these thoughts awake with me in the morning, and go to bed with me. Oh, what service can a dumb body do in Christ's house! Oh, I think the word of God is imprisoned also! Oh, I am a dry tree! Alas, I can neither plant nor water! Oh, if[2] my Lord would make but dung of me, to fatten and make fertile his own corn-ridges in mount Zion! Oh, if I might but speak to three or four herd-boys[3] of my worthy Master, I would be satisfied to be the meanest and most obscure of all the pastors in this land, and to live in any place, in any of Christ's basest outhouses! but he saith, "Sirrah, I will not send you, I have no errands for you thereaway."[4] My desire to serve him is sick of jealousy, lest he be unwilling to employ me. Secondly, This is seconded by another; Oh! all that I have done in Anwoth, the fair work that my Master began there, is like a bird dying in the shell: and what will I then have to show of all my labor, in the day of my compearance[5] before him, when the Master of the vineyard calleth the laborers, and giveth them their hire? Thirdly, But truly, when Christ's sweet wind is in the right airth,[6] I repent, and I pray Christ to take law-burrows[7] of my quarrelous unbelieving sadness and sorrow;—Lord, rebuke them that put ill betwixt a poor servant like me and his good Master:—then I say, whether the black cross will or not, I must climb on hands and feet up to my Lord. I am now ruing from my heart, that I pleasured the Law, (my old dead husband,) so far as to apprehend wrath in my sweet Lord Jesus. I had far rather take a hire to plead for the grace of God, for I think myself Christ's sworn debtor: and the truth is, to speak of my Lord, what I cannot deny, I am over head and ears, drowned in many obligations to his love and mercy—he handleth me some-

1 To cause dirt to rise at the horse's heels.
2 Oh, that.
3 Boys who tend cattle in the fields.
4 In those parts.
5 Appearance.
6 Point of the compass.
7 Legal security, which a man is obliged to give to the person who swears the peace against him, that he will not injure that individual, in person or property.

times so, that I am ashamed almost to seek more for a four-hours,[1] but to live content, till the marriage-supper of the Lamb, with that which he giveth. But I know not how greedy and how ill to please love is; for either my Lord Jesus hath taught me ill manners, not to be content with a seat, except my head lie in his bosom, and except I be fed with the fatness of his house; or else I am grown impatiently dainty, and ill[2] to please, as if Christ were obliged, under this cross, to do no other thing but bear me in his arms, and as if I had claim by his merit for my suffering for him. But I wish he would give me grace to learn to go on my own feet, and to learn to do without his comforts, and to give thanks and believe, when the sun is not in my firmament, and when my Well-beloved is from home, and gone another errand. Oh, what sweet peace have I, when I find that Christ holdeth and I draw,—when I climb up and he shuteth[3] me down,—when I embrace him and he seemeth to loose the grips[4] and flee away from me! I think there is even a sweet joy of faith, and contentedness, and peace, in his very tempting unkindness, because my faith saith, "Christ is not in sad earnest[5] with me, but trying if I can be kind to his mask and cloud that covereth him, as well as to his fair face." I bless his great name that I love his veil which goeth over his face, whill God send better: for faith can kiss God's tempting reproaches when he nicknameth a sinner, "A dog, not worthy to eat bread with the bairns."[6] I think it an honor that Christ miscalleth[7] me, and reproacheth me; I will take that well of him, howbeit I would not bear it well if another should be that homely;[8] but because I am his own, (God be thanked,) he may use me as he pleaseth. I must say, the saints have a sweet life between them and Christ. There is much sweet solace of love between him and them, when he feedeth among the lilies, and cometh into his garden, and maketh a feast of honeycombs, and drinketh his wine and his milk, and crieth, "Eat, O Friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O Well-beloved." One hour of this labor is worth a shipful of the world's drunken and muddy joy: nay, even the gate[9] of Heaven is the sunny side of the brae,[10] and the very garden of the world; for the men of this world have their own unchristened and profane crosses; and wo be to them and their cursed crosses both; for their ills are salted with God's vengeance, and our ills seasoned with our Father's blessing: so that they are no fools who choose Christ, and sell all things for him; it is no bairns' market, nor a blind block;[11] we know well what we get, and what we give.

Now, for any resolution to go to any other kingdom, I dare not speak one word: my hopes of enlargement are cold, my hopes of re-entry to my Master's ill-dressed vineyard again are far colder:

[1] Slight afternoon's repast. [2] Difficult. [3] Shoveth, pusheth.
[4] Hold. [5] Sober earnest. [6] Children, Mark vii. 27, 28.
[7] Calleth me names. [8] So familiar. [9] Way.
[10] Slope, declivity. *Sunny side of the brae*, the most warm, sheltered, and comfortable situation. [11] Bargain.

I have no seat for my faith to sit on, but bare omnipotency, and God's holy arm and good-will; here I desire to stay, and ride at anchor, and winter, whill God send fair weather again, and be pleased to take home to his house my Harlot-Mother. Oh, if her Husband would be that[1] kind, as to go and fetch her out of the brothel-house, and chase her lovers to the hills!—but there will be sad days ere it come to that. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.

Yours, in our Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLIII.

TO THE LADY BUSBIE.

MISTRESS,—Although not acquaint,[2] yet because we are Father's children, I thought good to write unto you. Howbeit my first discourse and communing with you of Christ be on paper; yet I have cause, since I came hither, to have no paper-thoughts[3] of him; for in my sad days he has become the flower of my joys, and I but lie here living upon his love; but cannot get so much of it as I fain would have; not because Christ's love is lordly, and looketh too high, but because I have a narrow vessel to receive his love, and I look too low. But I give under my own hand-write[4] to you a testimonial[5] of Christ and his cross, that they are a sweet couple, and that Christ hath never yet been set in his due chair of honor amongst us all. Oh, I know not where to set him! Oh! for a high seat to that royal, princely One! Oh, that my poor withered soul had once a running-over flood of that love, to put sap into my dry root, and, that that flood would spring out to the tongue, and the pen, to utter great things to the high and due commendation of such a fair One! Oh, holy, holy, holy One! Alas! there are too many dumb tongues in the world, and dry hearts, seeing there is employment in Christ for them all, and ten thousand worlds of men and angels moe, to set on high and exalt the greatest Prince of the kings of the earth.

Wo is me, that bits of living clay dare come out, to rush hard-heads with him; and that my unkind Mother, this Harlot-kirk, hath given her sweet half-marrow[6] such a meeting; for this land hath given up with Christ, and the Lord is cutting Scotland in two halves, and sending the worst half, the harlot-sister, over to Rome's brothel-house, to get her fill of Egypt's love. I would my sufferings (nay, suppose I were burnt quick to ashes,) might buy an agreement betwixt his fairest and sweetest love, and his gawdy, lewd wife; fain would I give Christ his welcome-home to Scotland again, if he would return. This is a black day, a day of clouds

[1] So.
[2] Acquainted.
[3] Slight thoughts.
[4] Subscription.
[5] A certificate of character.
[6] Married partner.

and darkness; for the roof-tree[1] of the fair temple of my Lord Jesus hath fallen, and Christ's back is toward Scotland. Oh, thrice blessed are they who could hold Christ with their tears and prayers! I know that ye will help to deal with him, for he will return again to this land. The next day shall be Christ's, and there will be a fair, green, young garden for Christ in this land, and God's summer-dew shall lye on it all the night, and we will sing again our new marriage-song to our Bridegroom, concerning his vineyard;—but who knoweth whether we shall live and see it?

I hear that the Lord is taking pains to afflict and dress you, as a fruitful vine, for himself. Grow and be green, and cast out your branches, and bring forth fruit; fat, and green, and fruitful may ye be, in the true and sappy root! Grace, grace, free grace be your portion! Remember my bonds, with prayers and praises.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLIV.

TO NINIAN MURE.

Loving Friend,—I received your letter. I entreat you now, in the morning of your life, to seek the Lord and his face. Beware of the folly of dangerous youth—a perilous time for your soul. Love not the world. Keep faith and truth with all men, in your covenants and bargains. Walk with God, for he seeth you. Do nothing but that which ye may and would do, if your eye-strings were breaking, and your breath growing cold. Ye heard the truth of God from me, my dear Heart; follow it, and forsake it not. Prize Christ and salvation above all the world. To live after the guise and course of the rest of the world, will not bring you to Heaven; without faith in Christ, and repentance, ye cannot see God. Take pains for salvation; press forward toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling: if ye watch not against evils night and day, which beset you, ye will come behind.[2] Beware of lying, swearing, uncleanness, and the rest of the works of the flesh; because, "For these things the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." How sweet soever they may seem for the present, yet the end of these courses is the eternal wrath of God, and utter darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

[1] The beam running along the roof, against which the rafters incline.
[2] Fall short.

LETTER CCLV.

TO MR. THOMAS GARVEN.

Reverend and dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am sorry that what joy and sorrow drew from my imprisoned pen, in my love-fits, hath made you and many of God's children believe, that there is something in a broken reed the like of me: except that Christ's grace hath bought such a sold body, I know not what else any may think of me, or expect from me. My stock is less, (my Lord knoweth that I speak truth,) than many believe. My empty sounds have promised too much. I should be glad to lie under Christ's feet, and kep[1] and receive the off-fallings, or any old pieces of any grace, that fall from his sweet fingers to forlorn sinners. I lie often, unco-like,[2] looking in at the King's windows. Surely, I am unworthy of a seat in the King's hall-floor: I but often look afar off, both feared and fremmed-like,[3] to that fairest face, fearing He bid me look away from him. My guiltiness riseth up upon me, and I have no answer for it. I offered my tongue to Christ, and my pains in his house; and what know I what it meaneth, when Christ will not receive my poor propine?[4] When love will not take, we expone[5] that it will neither take nor give, borrow nor lend. Yet Christ hath another sea-compass which he saileth by, than my short and raw thoughts —I leave his part of it to himself. I dare not expound his dealing, as sorrow and misbelief[6] often dictate to me: I look often with bleared and blind eyes to my Lord's cross; and when I look to the wrong side of his cross, I know that I miss a step, and slide. Surely, I see that I have not legs of my own for carrying me to Heaven; I must go in at Heaven's gates, borrowing strength from Christ.

I am often thinking, oh, if he would but give me leave to love him, and if Christ would but open up his wares, and the infinite plies, and windings, and corners of his soul-delighting love; and let me see it, backside and foreside; and give me leave but to stand beside it, like a hungry man beside meat, to get my fill of wondering, as a preface to my fill of enjoying! But verily, I think that my foul eyes would defile his fair love to look to it. Either my hunger is over humble, (if that may be said,) or else I consider not what honor it is to get leave to love Christ. Oh, that he would pity a prisoner, and let out a flood upon the dry ground! It is nothing to him to fill the like of me; one of his looks would do me meikle world's good,[7] and him no ill. I know that I am not at a point yet with Christ's love. I am not yet fitted for so much as I would have of it. My hope sitteth neighbor with

[1] To intercept.
[2] Seemingly strange.
[3] Having the appearance or guise of a stranger, of one in nowise related by blood.
[4] Present.
[5] Expound.
[6] Weak faith.
[7] More good than all the world.

meikle black hunger:[1] and certainly, I dow not[2] but think, that there is more of than love ordained for me than I yet comprehend, and that I know not the weight of the pension which the King will give me. I shall be glad if my hungry bill get leave to lie beside Christ, waiting on an answer. Now I should be full and rejoice, if I got a poor man's alms of that sweetest love: but I confidently believe, that there is a bed made for Christ and me, and that we shall take our fill of love in it; and I often think, when my joy is run out, and at the lowest ebb, that I would seek no more than my rights[3] passed the King's great seal, and that these eyes of mine could see Christ's hand at the pen.

If your Lord call you to suffering, be not dismayed: there shall be a new allowance of the King for you when ye come to it. One of the softest pillows Christ hath, is laid under his witnesses' head, though often they must set down their bare feet among thorns. He hath brought my poor soul to desire and wish, oh, that my ashes, and the powder I shall be dissolved into, had well-tuned tongues to praise him.

Thus in haste, desiring your prayers and praises, I recommend you to my sweet, sweet Master, my honorable Lord, of whom I hold all. Grace be with you.

Your own, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLVI.

TO THE EARL OF CASSILLIS.

My very honorable, and noble Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Lordship.—Pardon me to express my earnest desire to your Lordship for Zion's sake, for whom we should not hold our peace;—I that know your Lordship will take my pleading, on this behalf, in the better part, because the necessity of a falling and weak Church is urgent;—I that believe your Lordship is one of Zion's friends, and that by obligation; for when the Lord shall count and write up the people, it shall be written, "This man was born there:" therefore, because your Lordship is a born son of the House, I hope your desire is, that the beauty and glory of the Lord may dwell in the midst of the city, whereof your Lordship is a son. It must be, without all doubt, the greatest honor of your place and House, to kiss the Son of God, and for his sake to be kind to his oppressed and wronged bride, who, now in the day of her desolation, beggeth help of you, that are the shields of the earth. I am sure that many kings, princes, and nobles, in the day of Christ's second coming, would be glad to run errands for Christ, even barefooted, through fire and water; but in that day he will have none of their service. Now he is asking, if your Lordship will help him against the mighty of the earth, when

[1] Much utter hunger. [2] Am not able. [3] Charters, title-deeds.

men are setting their shoulders to Christ's fair and beautiful Tent in this land, to loosen its stakes, and break it down; and certainly such as are not with Christ, are against him; and blessed shall your Lordship be of the Lord, blessed shall your house and seed be, and blessed shall your honor be, if ye empawned and laid in Christ's hand the Earldom of Cassillis, (and it is but a shadow in comparison of the City made without hands,) and laid it even at the stake, rather than Christ and borne-down truth have not a witness of you against the apostasy of this land. Ye hold your lands of Christ, your charters are under his seal, and He who hath many crowns on his head, dealeth, cutteth, and carveth pieces of this clay-heritage to men, at his pleasure. It is little that your Lordship hath to give him. He will not sleep long in your common,[1] but shall surely pay home your losses for his cause. It is but our bleared eyes that look through a false glass to this idol-god of clay, and think something of it. They who are passed with their last sentence to Heaven or Hell, and have made their reckoning, and departed out of this smoky inn, have now no other conceit of this world, but as a piece of beguiling well-lustred clay. —And how fast doth time, (like a flood in motion,) carry your Lordship out of it! and is not eternity coming with wings? Court goeth not in Heaven as it doeth here. Our Lord, (who hath all you, the nobles, lying in the shell[2] of his balance,) esteemeth you accordingly as ye are the Bridegroom's friends or foes. Your honorable ancestors, with the hazard of their lives, brought Christ to our hands; and it will be cruelty to the posterity, if ye lose him to them. One of our tribes, Levi's sons, the watchmen, are fallen from the Lord, and have sold their Mother, and their Father also, and the Lord's truth, for their new velvet-world, and their satin church. If ye, the nobles, play Christ a slip, now when his back is at the wall,[3] (if I may so speak,) then may we say, that the Lord hath casten water upon Scotland's smoking coal. But we hope better things of you. It is not wisdom, however it be the state-wisdom now in request, to be silent, when they are casting lots for a better thing than Christ's coat. All this land, and every man's part of the play for Christ, and tears of poor and friendless Zion, (now going dool-like[4] in sackcloth,) are up in Heaven before our Lord; and there is no question, but our King and Lord shall be master of the fields at length. We would all be glad to divide the spoil with Christ, and to ride in triumph with him; but oh, how few will take a cold bed of straw in the camp with him! how fain would men have a well-thatched house above their heads, all the way to Heaven! and many now, would go to Heaven the land way, (for they love not to be sea-sick,) riding up to Christ upon foot-mantles, and rattling coaches, and rubbing their velvet with the princes of the land in the highest seats:—If this be the way that Christ called strait and narrow, I quit all skill of the

[1] Under obligation to you.
[2] Scale.
[3] One's *back* is said *to be at the wall* when one is in a depressed and unfortunate condition.
[4] In mourning guise.

way to salvation. Are they not now rouping[1] Christ and the Gospel? Have they not put our Lord Jesus to the market, and he who out-biddeth his fellow shall get him?

O my dear, and noble Lord, go on, (howbeit the wind be in your face,) to back our princely Captain. Be courageous for him. Fear not those who have no subscribed lease of days. The worms shall eat kings. Let the Lord Jehovah be your fear; and then, as the Lord liveth, the victory is yours. It is true that many are striking up a new way to Heaven; but, my soul for theirs if they find it, and if this be not the only way, whose end is Christ's Father's house; and my weak experience, since the day I was first in bonds, hath confirmed me in the truth and assurance of this. Let doctors and learned men cry the contrary, I am persuaded that this is the way. The bottom hath fallen out of both their wisdom and conscience at once; their book hath beguiled them, for we have fallen upon the true Christ. I dare hazard, if I alone had ten souls, my salvation upon this Stone, that many now break their bones upon. Let them take this fat world.—Oh, poor and hungry is their paradise! Therefore let me entreat your Lordship, by your compearance[2] before Christ, now while this piece of the afternoon of your day is before you, (for ye know not when your sun will turn, and eternity shall benight you,) let your worldly glory, honor, and might be for our Lord Jesus. And to his rich grace and tender mercy, and to the never-dying comforts of his gracious Spirit, I recommend your Lordship and your noble House.

Your Lordship's, at all obedience, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 9, 1637.

LETTER CCLVII.

TO THE LADY LARGIRIE.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I hope ye know what conditions passed betwixt Christ and you, at your first meeting. Ye remember that he said, your summer days would have clouds, and your rose a prickly thorn beside it. Christ is unmixed in Heaven, all sweetness and honey. Here we have him with his thorny and rough cross: yet I know no tree that beareth sweeter fruit than Christ's cross, except I would raise a lying report on it. It is your part to take Christ, as he is to be had in this life. Sufferings are like a wood planted round about his house, over door and window. If we could hold fast our grips[3] of him, the field were won. Yet a little while, and Christ shall triumph. Give Christ his own short time, to spin out these two long threads of Heaven and Hell to all mankind—for certainly the thread will not break—and when he hath accomplished his work in Mount Zion, and hath refined his silver, he will bring new

[1] Auctioning. [2] Appearance. [3] Gripe, hold.

vessels out of the furnace, and plenish[1] his house, and take up his house[2] again.

I counsel you to free yourself of clogging temptations, by overcoming some, and contemning others, and watching over all. Abide true and loyal to Christ, for few now are fast to him. They give Christ blank paper, for a bond of service and attendance, now when Christ hath most ado. To waste a little blood with Christ, and to put our part of this drossy world in pawn over in his hand, as willing to quit it for him, is the safest cabinet to keep the world in. But those who would take the world and all their flitting[3] on their back, and run away from Christ, shall fall by the way, and leave their burden behind them, and be taken captives themselves. Well were my soul, to have put all I have, life and soul, over into Christ's hands. Let him be forthcoming[4] for all.

If any ask how I do? I answer, None can be but well that are in Christ: and if I were not so, my sufferings had melted me away in ashes and smoke.—I thank my Lord, that he hath something in me that this fire cannot consume.

Remember my love to your husband; and show him from me, that I desire that he may set aside all things, and make sure work of salvation, that it be not a-seeking, when the sand-glass is run out, and time and eternity shall tryste[5] together. There is no errand so weighty as this. Oh, that he would take it to heart. Grace be with you.

Yours, in Christ Jesus his Lord. S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLVIII.

TO THE LADY DUNGUEIGH.

Mistress,—I long to hear from you, and how you go on with Christ. I am sure that Christ and you once met. I pray you to fasten your grips;[6] there is holding and drawing, and much seaway to Heaven, and we are often sea-sick, but the voyage is so needful, that we must on any terms take shipping with Christ. I believe it is a good country which we are going to, and there is ill lodging in this smoky house of the world, in which we are yet living. Oh, that we should love smoke so well, and clay that holdeth our feet fast! It were our happiness to follow after Christ, and to anchor ourselves upon the Rock, in the upper side of the veil. Christ and Satan are now drawing to parties; and they are blind who see not Scotland divided into two camps, and Christ coming out with his white banner of love, and he hangeth that over the heads of his soldiers; and the other captain, the Dragon, is coming out with a great black flag, and crieth, "The world,

1 Furnish. 2 *To take up house*, to enter on house-keeping.
3 Goods removable from one residence to another. 4 Answerable.
5 Meet. 6 Gripe, hold.

the world, ease, honor, and a whole skin, and a soft couch;" and there lie they, and leave Christ to fend for[1] himself.

My counsel is, that ye come out and leave the multitude, and let Christ have your company. Let them take clay and this present world, who love it. Christ is a more worthy and noble portion; blessed are those who get him. It is good, ere the storm rise, to make ready all, and to be prepared to go to the camp with Christ, seeing he will not keep the house, nor sit at the fire-side with couchers.[2] A shower for Christ is little enough. Oh, I find all too little for him! Wo, wo, wo is me, that I have no propine[3] for my Lord Jesus. My love is so feckless,[4] that it is a shame to offer it to him. Oh, if it were as broad as Heaven, as deep as the sea, I would gladly bestow it upon him! I persuade you, that God is wringing grapes of red wine for Scotland; and that this land shall drink, and spue, and fall. His enemies shall drink the thick of it, and the grounds of it. But Scotland's withered tree shall blossom again; and Christ shall make a second marriage with her, and take home his wife out of the furnace. But, if our eyes shall see it, He knoweth who hath created time. Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLIX.

TO JONET MACCULLOCH.

Loving Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Hold on your course, for, it may be, that I shall not soon see you: venture through the thick of all things after Christ, and lose not your Master, Christ, in the throng of this great market. Let Christ know how heavy, and how many a stone-weight you, and your cares, burdens, crosses, and sins are. Let him bear all. Make the heritage sure to yourself: get charters and writs passed and through; and put on arms for the battle, and keep you fast by Christ, and then, let the wind blow out of what airth[5] it will, your soul shall not be blown into the sea.

I find Christ the most steadable[6] friend and companion in the world to me now:—the need and usefulness of Christ are seen best in trials. Oh, if he be not well worthy of his room! Lodge him in house and heart; and stir up your husband to seek the Lord. I wonder that he hath never written to me: I do not forget him.

I taught you the whole counsel of God, and delivered it to you: it will be inquired for at your hands; have it in readiness against the time that the Lord ask for it. Make you ready to meet the

[1] Shift for. [2] Cowards. [3] Present. [4] Faithless, feeble.
[5] Direction, point of the compass. [6] Available.

Lord; and rest and sleep in the love of that Fairest among the sons of men. Desire Christ's beauty. Give out all your love to him, and let none fall by. Learn in prayer to speak to him.

Help your mother's soul; and desire her, from me, to seek the Lord and his salvation. It is not soon found: many miss it. Grace be with you.

Your loving pastor, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLX.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND VERY DEAR BROTHER, MR. GEORGE GILLESPIE.

My very dear Brother,—I received yours.—I am still with the Lord. His cross hath done that which I thought impossible once; Christ keepeth tryste[1] in the fire and water with his own, and cometh ere our breath go out, and ere our blood grow cold.

Blessed are they whose feet escape the great, golden net that is now spread. It is happiness to take the crabbed, rough, and poor side of Christ's world, which is a lease of crosses and losses for him; for Christ's incomes and casualties that follow him are many; and it is not a little one, that a good conscience may be had in following him. This is true gain, and must be labored for, and loved.

Many give Christ for a shadow, because Christ was rather beside their conscience, in a dead and reprobate light, than in their conscience. Let us, therefore, be ballasted with grace, that we be not blown over, and that we stagger not. Yet a little while, and Christ and his redeemed ones shall fill the field, and come out victorious: Christ's glory of triumphing in Scotland is yet in the bud, and in the birth; but the birth cannot prove an abortion. He shall not faint nor be discouraged, till he hath brought forth judgment unto victory. Let us still mind our Covenant: and the very God of peace be with you.

Your brother in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 9, 1637.

LETTER CCLXI.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER, MR. ROBERT BLAIR.

Reverend, and dear Brother,—The reason ye gave for not writing to me, affecteth me much, and giveth me a dash, when such an one as ye conceive an opinion of me, or of anything in me. The truth is, when I come home to myself, oh, what penury do I find, and how feckless[2] is my supposed stock,

[1] *Keep tryste*, obtemperate an appointment. [2] Worthless.

and how little have I! He to whom I am as crystal, and who seeth through me, and perceiveth the least mote that is in me, knoweth that I speak what I think and am convinced of: but men cast me through a gross and wide sieve. My very dear brother, the room of the least of all saints is too great for the like of me; but, lest this should seem art, to fetch home reputation, I speak no more of it. It is my worth to be Christ's ransomed sinner and sick one; his relation to me is, that I am sick, and he is the Physician of whom I stand in need. Alas, how often play I fast and loose with Christ! He bindeth, I loose; he buildeth, I cast down; he trimmeth up a salvation for me, and I mar it; I cast out[1] with Christ, and he agreeth with me again, twenty times a-day; I forfeit my kingdom and heritage; I lose what I had; but Christ is at my back, and following on, to stoop and take up what falleth from me. Were I in Heaven, and had the crown on my head, if Free-will were my tutor, I should lose Heaven: seeing I lose myself, what wonder I should let go, and lose Jesus, my Lord? Oh, well to me for evermore, that I have cracked my credit with Christ, and cannot by law at all borrow from him, upon my feckless[2] and worthless bond and faith! For my faith and reputation with Christ, is, that I am a creature that God will not put any trust into. I was, and am bewildered with temptations, and wanted a guide to Heaven:—oh, what have I to say of that excellent, surpassing, and super-eminent thing, they call, The grace of God, the way of free redemption in Christ! And when poor, poor I, dead in law, was sold, fettered, and imprisoned, in justice's closest ward, which is hell and damnation; when I, a wretched one, lighted upon noble Jesus, eternally kind Jesus, tender-hearted Jesus; nay, when he lighted upon me first, and knew me; I found that he scorned to take a price, or anything like hire, of angels or seraphim, or any of his creatures; and, therefore, I would praise him for this, that the whole army of the redeemed ones sit rent-free in Heaven. Our holding is better than blench:[3] we are all freeholders. And seeing that our eternal feu-duty[4] is but thanks, oh, woful me! that I have but spilled[5] thanks, lame, and broken, and miscarried praises to give him, and so my silver[6] is not good and current with Christ, were it not that free merits have stamped it, and washen[7] it and me both! And for my silence I see somewhat better through it now. If my high and lofty One, my princely and royal Master, say, "Hold, hold thy peace, I lay bonds on thee, thou must speak none," I would fain be content, and let my fire be smothered under ashes, without light or flame! I cannot help it. I take laws from my Lord, but I give none.

As for your journey to F., ye do well to follow it. The camp is Christ's ordinary bed. A carried bed is kindly to the Beloved,

[1] Fall out. [2] Feeble.
[3] *Blench-holding*, is a holding by the payment, if demanded, of some nominal quit-rent, as a rose, an arrow, etc. [4] Yearly rent for a fief.
[5] Spoiled. [6] Money. [7] Washed.

down in this lower house. It may be, and who knoweth but our Lord has some centurions, whom ye are sent to, seeing your angry Mother denieth you lodging and house-room with her. Christ's call to unknown faces must be your second wind, seeing ye cannot have a first. Oh, that our Lord would water again with a new visit, this piece withered and dry hill of our Widow—Mount Zion!

My dear brother, I shall think it comfort, if ye speak my name to our Well-beloved. Wherever ye are, I am mindful of you. Oh, that the Lord would yet make the light of the moon in Scotland as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold brighter. For myself, as yet I have received no answer whither to go. I wait on. Oh, that Jesus had my love! Let matters frame as they list, I have some more to do with Christ; yet I would fain we were nearer.

Now the great Shepherd of the sheep, the very God of peace, establish and confirm you, till the day of his coming.

Yours, in his lovely and sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 9, 1637.

LETTER CCLXII.

TO THE LADY CARLTON.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—My soul longeth once again to be amongst you, and to behold that beauty of the Lord, that I would see in his house; but I know not if He in whose hands are all our ways, seeth it expedient for his glory. I owe my Lord, I know, submission of spirit, suppose he should turn me into a stone, or pillar of salt. Oh, that I were he in whom my Lord could be glorified! suppose my little heaven were forfeited, to buy glory to him before men and angels; suppose my want of his presence, and separation from Christ were a pillar as high as ten heavens for Christ's glory to stand upon, above all the world. What am I to him? How little am I, (though my feathers stood out as broad as the morning light,) to such a high, to such a lofty, to such a never-enough admired and glorious Lord! My trials are heavy, because of my sad Sabbaths; but I know that they are less than my high provocations. I seek no more than that Christ may be the gainer, and I the loser; that he may be raised and heightened, and I cried down, and my worth made dust before his glory. Oh, that Scotland, all with one shout, would cry up Christ, and that his name were high in this land! I find the very utmost borders of Christ's high excellency and deep sweetness, Heaven's and earth's wonder. Oh, what is he? if I could but win in[1] to see his inner side! Oh, I am run dry of loving, and wondering, and adoring of that greatest and most

[1] Get in.

admirable One! Wo, wo is me, I have not half love for him! Alas, what can my drop do to his great sea! what gain is it to Christ, that I have casten my little sparkle into his great fire! What can I give to him! Oh, that I had love to fill a thousand worlds, that I might empty my soul of it all upon Christ! I think I have just reason to quit my part of any hope or love that I have to this scum, and the refuse of the dross of God's workmanship, this vain earth. I owe to this stormy world, (whose kindness and heart to me have been made of iron, or a piece of a wild sea-island, that never a creature of God lodged in,) not a look: I owe it no love, no hope; and, therefore, oh, if [1] my love were dead to it, and my soul dead to it! What am I obliged to this house of my pilgrimage? A straw for all that God hath made, to my soul's liking, except God, and that lovely One, Jesus Christ. Seeing I am not this world's debtor, I desire that I may be stripped of all confidence in anything but my Lord, that he may be for me, and I for my only, only, only Lord; that he may be the morning and evening tide, the top and the root of my joys, and the heart and flower and yolk of all my soul's delights. Oh, let me never lodge any creature in my heart and confidence! Let the house be for him. I rejoice, that sad days cut off a piece of the lease of my short life; and that my shadow, even while I suffer, weareth long, and my evening hasteneth on. I have cause to love home with all my heart; and to take the opportunity of the day to hasten to the end of my journey, before the night come on, wherein a man cannot see to walk or work; that once,[2] after my falls, I may at night fall in, weary and tired as I am, into Christ's bosom, and betwixt his breasts. Our prison cannot be our best country. This world looketh not like Heaven and the happiness that our tired souls would be at; and, therefore, it were good to seek about for the wind, and hoist up our sails towards our New Jerusalem, for that is our best.

Remember a prisoner to Christ. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his only Lord and Master, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLXIII.

TO WILLIAM RIGGE, OF ATHERNIE.

MUCH HONORED, AND WORTHY SIR,—Your letter, full of complaints, bemoaning your guiltiness, hath humbled me. But give me leave to say that ye seem to be too far upon the Law's side; ye will not gain much to be the law's advocate. I thought ye had not been the law's, but Grace's man; nevertheless, I am sure that ye desire to take God's part against yourself. Whatever your guiltiness be, yet when it falleth into the sea of God's mercy,

[1] Oh, that. [2] At last.

it is but like a drop of blood fallen into the great ocean. There is nothing here to be done, but to let Christ's doom light on the Old Man, and let him bear his condemnation, seeing in Christ he was condemned; for the law hath but power over your worst half. Let the blame, therefore, lie where the blame should be; and let the New Man be sure to say, "I am comely as the tents of Kedar, howbeit I be black and sun-burnt, by sitting neighbor beside a body of sin." I seek no more here than room for Grace's defence, and Christ's white throne, whereto a sinner, condemned by the law, may appeal. But the use that I make of it, is, I am sorry that I am not so tender and thin-skinned, though I am sure that Christ may find employment for his calling in me, if in any living, seeing, from my youth upward, I have been making up the blackest process that any minister in the world, or any other can answer to.

And, when I had done this, I painted a providence of my own, and wrote ease for myself, and a peaceable ministry, and the sun shining on me, till I should be in at Heaven's gates:—such green and raw thoughts had I of God! I thought also of a sleeping devil, that would pass by the like of me, lying in muirs[1] and outfields;[2] so I bigged[3] the gowk's nest,[4] and dreamed of dying at ease, and living in a fool's paradise: but since I came hither, I am often so, as they would have much rhetoric that could persuade me, that Christ hath not written wrath on my dumb and silent Sabbaths; (which is a persecution of the latest edition, being used against none in this land, that I can learn of, besides me;) and often I lie under a non-entry, and would gladly sell all my joys to be confirmed free tenant of the King Jesus, and to have sealed assurances—but I see often blank papers. And my greatest desires are these two:—1. That Christ would take me in hand to cure me, and undertake for a sick man. I know that I should not die under his hand; and yet in this, while I still doubt, I believe through a cloud, that sorrow, which hath no eyes, hath but put a veil on Christ's love.—2. It pleaseth him often, since I came hither, to come with some short blinks[5] of his sweet love; and then, because I have none to help me to praise his love, and can do him no service in my own person, (as I once thought I did in his temple,) I die with wishes and desires to take up house, and dwell at the Well-side, and to have him praised and set on high. But alas! what can the like of me do, to get a good name raised upon my Well-beloved Lord Jesus, suppose I could desire to be suspended forever, of my part of heaven, for his glory? I am sure, if I could get my will of Christ's love, and could once be over head and ears, in the believed, apprehended, and seen love of the Son of God, it were the fulfilling of the desires of the only happi-

1 Extensive tracts of waste land, covered with heath.

2 Wild, unfrequented places.

3 Builded.

4 Cuckoo's nest. The cuckoo is understood not to build a nest of her own, but to lay her eggs in that of another bird; hence, *to big*, or build the *gowk's*, or cuckoo's *nest*, to rest on unfounded hopes.

5 Glimpses.

ness I would be at. But the truth is, I hinder my communion with him, because of the want of both faith and repentance, and because I will make an idol of Christ's kisses. I will neither lead nor drive, except I see Christ's love run in my channel; and when I wait and look for him the upper way, I see his wisdom is pleased to play me a slip, and come the lower way: so that I have not the right art of guiding Christ; for there is art and wisdom required in guiding of Christ's love aright when we have gotten it. Oh, how far are his ways above mine! Oh, how little of him do I see! And when I am as dry as a burnt heath, in a drouthy[1] summer, and when my root is withered, howbeit I think then, that I would drink a sea-full of Christ's love, ere ever I would let the cup go from my head; yet I get nothing but delays, as if he would make hunger my daily food. I think myself also hungered of hunger;—the rich Lord Jesus satisfy a famished man.

Grace be with you.

Your own, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 10, 1637.

LETTER CCLXIV.

TO THE LADY CRAIGHALL.

Honorable, and Christian Lady,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I cannot but write to your Ladyship, of the sweet and glorious terms I am in with the most joyful King that ever was, under this well-thriving and prosperous cross. It is my Lord's salvation, wrought by his own right hand, that the water doth not suffocate the breath of hope, and joyful courage in the Lord Jesus; for his own person is still in the camp with his poor soldier. I see that the cross is tied, with Christ's hand, to the end of an honest profession. We are but fools to endeavor to loose Christ's knot. When I consider the comforts of God, I durst not consent to sell or wadset[2] my short life-rent of the cross of the Lord Jesus. I know that Christ bought with his own blood a right to sanctified and blessed crosses, in as far as they blow me over the water to my long desired home: and it were not good that Christ should be the buyer and I the seller. I know that time and death shall take sufferings fairly off my hand. I hope we shall have an honest parting at night, when this cold and frosty afternoon-tide of my evil and rough day shall be over. Well is my soul of either sweet or sour, that Christ hath any part or portion in: if he be at the one end of it, it shall be well with me. I shall die ere I libel faults against Christ's cross. It shall have my testimonial[3] under my hand, as an honest and saving mean of Christ for mortification and faith's growth. I have a stronger assurance, since I came over the Forth, of the excellency of Jesus, than I had before. I

[1] Droughty. [2] Alienate. [3] Certificate.

am rather about him than in him, while I am absent from him in this house of clay. But I would be in Heaven for no other cause than to essay and try what boundless joy it must be to be over head and ears in my Well-beloved Christ's love. Oh, that fair One hath my heart for evermore! But alas, it is over little for him! Oh, if[1] it were better and more worthy for his sake! Oh, if[1] I might meet with him, face to face, on this side of eternity, and might have leave to plead with him, that I am so hungered and famished here, with the niggardly portion of his love that he giveth me! Oh, that I might be carver and steward myself, at mine own will, of Christ's love! (if I may lawfully wish this,) then would I enlarge my vessel, (alas! a narrow and ebb[2] soul,) and take in a sea of his love. My hunger for it, is hungry and lean, in believing that ever I shall be satisfied with that love: so fain would I have what I know I cannot hold. O Lord Jesus, delightest thou, delightest thou, to pine and torment poor souls with the want of thy incomparable love! Oh, if[1] I durst call thy dispensation cruel! I know that thou thyself art mercy, without either brim or bottom: I know that thou art a God bank-full[3] of mercy and love; but, oh, alas! little of it cometh my way. I die to look afar off to that love, because I can get but little of it. But hope saith, "This providence shall ere long look more favorably upon poor bodies," and on me also. Grace be with your Ladyship's spirit.

Your Ladyship's, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 10, 1637.

LETTER CCLXV.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY LORD LOUDON.

RIGHT HONORABLE,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Lordship.—I rejoice exceedingly, to hear that your Lordship hath a good mind to Christ, and his now borne-down truth. My very dear Lord, go on, in the strength of the Lord, to carry your honors and worldly glory to the New Jerusalem: for this cause your Lordship received these of the Lord. This is a sure way for the establishment of your House, if ye be of those who are willing, in your place, to build Zion's old waste places in Scotland. Your Lordship wanteth not God's and man's law both, now to come to the streets for Christ: and suppose the bastard laws of man were against you, it is an honest and zealous error, if here ye slip against a point or punctilio of standing policy. When your foot slippeth in such known ground, as is the royal prerogative of our high and most truly dread Sovereign, (who hath many crowns on his head,) and the liberties of his house, he will hold you up. Blessed shall they be, who take Babel's little ones, and dash their

[1] Oh, that. [2] Shallow. [3] Full to the bank.

heads against the stones: I wish your Lordship may have a share of that blessing, with other worthy nobles in our land.

It is true that it is now accounted wisdom for men to be partners in pulling up the stakes, and loosing the cords of the tent of Christ: but I am persuaded, that that wisdom is cried down in Heaven, and shall never pass for true wisdom with the Lord, whose word crieth shame upon wit against Christ and truth: and, accordingly, it shall prove shame and confusion of face in the end. Our Lord hath given your Lordship light of a better stamp, and learning also, wherein ye are not behind the disputer and the scribe. Oh, what a blessed thing is it, to see nobility, learning, and sanctification, all concur in one! For these ye owe yourself to Christ and his kingdom. God hath bewildered and bemisted[1] the wit and the learning of the scribes and disputers of this time; they look asquint to the Bible; this blinding and bemisting[1] world blindfoldeth men's light, that they are afraid to see straight out before them: nay, their very light playeth the knave, or worse, to truth. Your Lordship knoweth that within a little while, policy against truth shall blush, and the works of men shall be burned up, even their spider's-web, who spin out many hundred ells and webs of indifferences in the Lord's worship, moe than ever Moses, who would have a hoof material, and Daniel, who would have a look out at a window, a matter of life and death—than ever, I say, these men of God dreamed of. Alas, that men dare to shape, carve, cut, and clip our King's princely testament in length and breadth, and in all dimensions, answerable to the conception of such policy as a head-of-wit[2] thinketh a safe and trim way of serving God! How have men forgotten the Lord, that they dare to go against even that truth, which once they preached themselves, howbeit their sermons now be as thin sown as strawberries in a wood or wilderness? Certainly the sweetest and safest course is, for this short time of the afternoon of this old and declining world, to stand for Jesus; he hath said it, and it is our part to believe it, that ere it be long, "Time shall be no more, and the Heaven shall wax old as a garment." Do we not see it already an old, and thread-bare garment, full of holes? Doth not cripple[3] and lame nature tell us, that the Lord will fold up the old garment, and lay it aside: and that the heavens shall be folded together as a scroll, and this pest-house shall be burnt with fire, and that both plenishing[4] and walls shall melt with fervent heat? for at the Lord's coming, he will do with this earth, as men do with a leper-house;[5] he will burn the walls with fire, and the plenishing[4] of the house also; (2 Peter iii. 10, 12.) My dear Lord, how will ye rejoice in that day, to have Christ, angels, Heaven, and your own conscience to smile upon you? I am persuaded that one sick night, through the terrors of the Almighty, would make men, (whose conscience has such a wide throat that an image like a cathedral church would go down it,) have other thoughts of Christ

[1] *To bemist*, to envelop in mist. [2] A wiseacre.
[3] Halting. [4] Furniture [5] Lazaretto.

and his worship, than now they please themselves with. The scarcity of faith in the earth saith, "We are hard upon the last nick[1] of time:" blessed are those who keep their garments clean against the Bridegroom's coming. There shall be spotted clothes, and many defiled garments, at his last coming; and, therefore, few found worthy to walk with him in white.

I am persuaded, my Lord, that this poor travailing Woman, our pained Church, is with child of victory, and shall bring forth a Man-child all lovely and glorious, that shall be caught up to God and to his throne, howbeit the Dragon, in his followers, be attending the child-birth pain, as an Egyptian midwife, to receive the birth and strangle it. But they shall be disappointed who thirst for the destruction of Zion: (Isa. xxix. 8,) "They shall be as when a hungry man dreameth that he eateth; but, behold, he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or when a thirsty man dreameth that he drinketh; but, behold, he awaketh, and is faint, and his soul is not satisfied: so shall it be," I say, "with the multitude of all the nations that fight against Mount Zion." Therefore, the weak and feeble, those that are "as signs and wonders in Israel," have chosen the best side, even the side that victory is upon; and I think this is no evil policy.

Verily, for myself, I am so well pleased with Christ, and his noble and honest-born cross, this cross that is come of Christ's house, and is of kin[2] to himself, that I should weep if it should come to niffering[3] and bartering of lots and condition with those that are "at ease in Zion." I hold still my choice, and bless myself in it. I see and I believe, that there is salvation in this way, which is everywhere spoken against. I hope to go to eternity, and to venture on the last evil to the saints, even upon death, fully persuaded that this only, even this, is the saving way for racked consciences, and for weary and laden sinners, to find ease and peace for evermore in. And, indeed, it is not for any worldly respect that I speak so of it. The weather is not so hot, that I have great cause to startle[4] in my prison, or to boast of that entertainment that my good friends, the prelates, intend for me, which is banishment, if they shall obtain their desire, and effectuate what they design. But let it come, I rue not that I made Christ my wale and my choice;[5] I think him aye the longer the better.

My Lord, it shall be good service to God, to hold your noble friend and chief[6] upon a good course for the truth of Christ. Now the very God of peace establish your Lordship in Christ Jesus unto the end.

Your Lordship's, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 10, 1637.

1 Moment. 2 Related. 3 Exchanging.
4 To run wildly about in an excited state, as cattle do in very hot weather.
5 The very best that could be chosen. 6 Argyll

LETTER CCLXVI.

TO MR. DAVID DICKSON.

REVEREND AND WELL-BELOVED BROTHER IN THE LORD,—I bless the Lord, who hath so wonderfully stopped the on-going of that lawless process against you. The Lord reigneth, and hath a saving eye upon you and your ministry; and, therefore, fear not what men can do. I bless the Lord, that the Irish ministers find employment, and the professors comfort of their ministry. Believe me, I durst not, as I am now disposed, hold an honest brother out of the pulpit. I trust that the Lord will guard you, and hide you in the shadow of his hand; I am not pleased with any that are against you in that.

I see this, that in prosperity men's conscience will not start at small sins; but if some had been where I have been since I came from you, a little more would have caused their eyes to water, and trouble their peace. Oh, how ready are we to incline to the world's hand! Our arguments, being well examined, are often drawn from our skin; the whole skin, and a peaceable tabernacle, is a topic-maxim in great request in our logic.

I find a little brairding[1] of God's seed in this town, for the which the doctors have told me their mind, that they cannot bear with it, and have examined and threatened the people that haunt my company. I fear I get not leave to winter here; and whither I go I know not; I am ready at the Lord's call. I would, I could make acquaintance with Christ's cross, for I find comforts lie to and follow upon the cross. I suffer, in my name, by them; but I take it as a part of the crucifying of the Old Man. Let them cut the throat of my credit, and do as they like best with it. When the wind of their calumnies hath blown away my good name from me, in the way to Heaven, I know that Christ will take my name out of the mire, and wash it, and restore it to me again. I would have a mind, (if the Lord would be pleased to give me it,) to be a fool for Christ's sake. Sometimes, while I have Christ in my arms, I fall asleep in the sweetness of his presence, and he, in my sleep, stealeth away out of my arms; and when I awake, I miss him.

I am much comforted with my Lady Pitsligo, a good woman, and acquainted with God's ways.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 11, 1637.

[1] Sprouting and appearing of seed above the ground.

LETTER CCLXVII.

TO ALEXANDER GORDON, OF EARLSTON.

MUCH HONORED SIR,—Howbeit I should have been glad to have seen you; yet, seeing that our Lord hath been pleased to break the snare of your adversaries, I heartily bless our Lord on your behalf. Our crosses for Christ are not made of iron; they are softer and of more gentle metal: it is easy for God to make a fool of the Devil, the father of all fools:—as for me, I but breathe out what my Lord breathed in. The scum and froth of my letters I father upon my unbelieving heart. I know that your Lord hath something to do with you, because Satan and malice have shot sore at you; but your bow abideth in its strength. Ye shall not, by my advice, be a halver with Christ, to divide the glory of your deliverance betwixt yourself and him, or any other second mean whatsoever. Let Christ, (as it setteth[1] him well,) have all the glory and triumph his lone.[2] The Lord set himself on high in you.

I see that Christ can borrow a cross for some hours, and set his servants beside it, rather than under it, and win the plea too, yea, and make glory to himself, and shame to his enemies, and comfort to his children, out of it:—but whether Christ buy or borrow crosses, he is King of crosses, and King of devils, and King over Hell, and King over malice. When he was in the grave, he came out, and brought the keys with him. He is Lord Jailer: nay, what say I? he is Captain of the castle, and he hath the keys of death and Hell: and what are our troubles but little deaths: and He who commandeth the great castle commandeth the little also.

2. I see that a hardened face, and two skins upon our brows, against the winter hail and stormy wind, is meetest for a poor traveller in a winter journey to Heaven. Oh, what art is it to learn to endure hardness, and to learn to go barefooted either through the Devil's fiery coals or his frozen waters.

3. I am persuaded that a sea-venture with Christ maketh great riches: is not the ship of our King Jesus coming home, and shall not we get part of the gold? Alas! we fools miscount our gain when we seem losers. Believe me, I have no challenges[3] against this well-born cross: for it is come of Christ's house, and is honorable, and is propine,[4] "To you it is given to suffer."—Oh, what fools are we, to undervalue his gifts, and to lightly[5] that which is true honor! For if we could be faithful, our tackling shall not loose, or our mast break, or our sails blow into the sea. The bastard crosses, the kinless and base-born crosses of worldlings for evil-doing, must be heavy and grievous; but our afflictions are light and momentary.

1 Becomes. 2 To himself alone. 3 Accusations.
4 Present, gift. 5 Make light of.

4. I think myself happy that I have lost credit with Christ, and that in this bargain, I am Christ's sworn dyvour,[1] to whom he will lippen[2] nothing, no, not one pin in the work of my salvation. Let me stand in black and white in the dyvour-book[3] before Christ. I am happy that my salvation is concredited[4] to Christ's mediation. Christ oweth no faith to me, to lippen[2] anything to me; but oh, what faith and credit I owe to him! Let my name fall, and let Christ's name stand in honor with men and angels. Alas! I have no room to spread out my affection before God's people: and I see not how I can shout out and cry out the loveliness, the high honor, and the glory of my fairest Lord Jesus. Oh, that he would let me have a bed to lie on, to be delivered of my birth, that I might paint him out in his beauty to men, as I dow.[5]

5. I wondered once at providence, and called white providence black and unjust, that I should be smothered in a town where no soul will take Christ off my hand; but providence hath another lustre with God than with my bleared eyes. I proclaim myself a blind body, who knoweth not black and white, in the unco[6] course of God's providence. Suppose that Christ should set Hell where Heaven is, and devils up in glory beside the elect angels, (which yet cannot be,) I would I had a heart to acquiesce in his way, without further dispute. I see that infinite wisdom is the mother of his judgments, and that his ways are past finding out.

6. I cannot learn; but I desire to learn to bring my thoughts, will, and lusts, in-under[7] Christ's feet, that he may trample upon them. But, alas! I am still upon Christ's wrong side.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 12, 1637.

LETTER CCLXVIII.

TO THE LADY KILCONQUHAIR.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter. I am heartily content, that ye love and own this oppressed and wronged cause of Christ; and that now, when so many have miscarried, ye are in any measure taken with the love of Jesus. Weary not, but come in, and see if there be not more in Christ than the tongue of men and angels can express. If ye seek a gate[8] to Heaven, the way is in him, or, he is it. What ye want is treasured up in Jesus, and he saith, all his are yours; even his Kingdom, he is content to divide it betwixt him and you: yea, his throne and his glory, (Luke xxii. 29, 30, John xvii. 24, and Rev. iii. 21.) And, therefore, take pains to climb up

1 Bankrupt. 2 Entrust. 3 Bankrupt-roll. 4 Accredited.
5 Am able. 6 Strange. 7 Under. 8 Way.

to that besieged house to Christ: for devils, men, and armies of temptations are lying about the house, to hold out all that are out, and it is taken with violence. It is not a smooth and easy way, neither will your weather be fair and pleasant; but whosoever hath seen the invisible God, and the fair City, make no reckoning of losses or crosses. In ye must be, cost you what it will. Stand not for a price, and for all that ye have, to win the castle; the rights to it are won to you, and it is disponed[1] to you in the Testament of your Lord Jesus; and see what a fair legacy your dying Friend, Christ, hath left you:—and there wanteth nothing but possession. Then get up in the strength of the Lord; get over the water to possess that good land. It is better than a land of olives and wine-trees; for the Tree of life, that beareth twelve manner of fruits every month, is there before you; and a pure River of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb, is there. Your time is short, therefore, lose no time. Gracious and faithful is He who hath called you to his Kingdom and glory. The city is yours by free conquest[2] and by promise, and, therefore, let no unco[3] lord-idol put you from your own. The Devil hath cheated the simple heir of his paradise, and, by enticing us to taste of the Forbidden Fruit, hath, as it were, bought us out of our kindly heritage.[4] But our Lord, Christ Jesus, hath done more than bought the Devil by,[5] for he hath redeemed the wadset,[6] and made the poor heir free to the inheritance. If we knew the glory of our Elder Brother in Heaven, we would long to be there to see him, and to get our fill of Heaven. We children think the earth a fair garden, but it is but God's outfield,[7] and wild, cold, barren ground. All things are fading that are here. It is our happiness to make sure of Christ to ourselves.

Thus remembering my love to your husband, and wishing to him what I write to you, I commit you to God's tender mercy.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 13, 1637.

LETTER CCLXIX.

TO ROBERT LENNOX, OF DISDOVE.

WORTHY AND DEAR BROTHER,—I forgot you not in my bonds. I know that ye are looking to Christ; and I beseech you to follow your look. I can say more of Christ now by experience, (though he be infinitely above, and beyond all that can be said of him,) than when I saw you: I am drowned over head and ears

1 Bequeathed. 2 Acquisition by purchase. 3 Strange.
4 Heritage to which we could claim a species of right in consequence of our origin.
5 Out. 6 Alienated property.
7 A term applied to the worst of the arable parts of a farm, which, according to the ancient method of Scottish husbandry, used to be cropped without having been manured till they were worn out, or, as it was called, *scourged*, and thus rendered unfit for bearing corn for some years.

in his love. Sell, sell, sell all things for Christ. If this whole world were the balk[1] of a balance, it would not be able to bear the weight of Christ's love; men and angels have short arms to fathom it. Set your feet upon this piece blue and base clay of an over-gilded and fair-plastered world:—an hour's kissing of Christ's is worth a world of worlds.

Sir, make sure work of your salvation: build not upon sand; lay the foundation upon the Rock in Zion. Strive to be dead to this world, and to your will and lusts. Let Christ have a commanding power and a king's throne in you. Walk with Christ, howbeit the world should take the skin off your face:—I promise you that Christ will win the field. Your pastors cause you to err. Except you see Christ's word, go not one foot with them. Countenance not the reading of that Romish service-book.[2] Keep your garments clean, as ye would walk with the Lamb clothed in white. The wrongs which I suffer are recorded in Heaven; our great Master and Judge will be upon us all, and bring us before the sun in our blacks and whites: blessed are they who watch and keep themselves in God's love. Learn to discern the Bridegroom's tongue, and to give yourself to prayer and reading. Ye were often a hearer of me. I would put my heart's blood on the doctrine which I taught, as the only way to salvation:—go not from it, my dear brother. What I write to you I write to your wife also. Mind Heaven and Christ, and keep the spark of the love of Christ which you have gotten. Christ will blow on it if ye entertain it, and your end shall be peace. There is a fire in our Zion, but our Lord is but seeking a new bride refined and purified out of the furnace. I assure you, howbeit we be nicknamed Puritans, that all the powers of the world shall not prevail against us. Remember, though a sinful man write to you, that those people shall be in Scotland as a green olive-tree, and a field blessed of the Lord; and that it shall be proclaimed—"Up, up with Christ, and down, down with all contrary powers."

Sir, pray for me—I name you to the Lord,—for further evil is determined against me.

Remember my love to Christian Murray, and her daughter. I desire her, in the edge[3] of her evening, to wait a little, the King is coming, and he hath something, that she never saw with him. Heaven is no dream; "Come and see" will teach her best. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 13, 1637.

[1] Beam. [2] Book of Common Prayer. [3] Twilight.

LETTER CCLXX.

TO MARION MACKNAUGHT.

Dearest in our Lord Jesus,—Count it your honor, that Christ hath begun at you, to refine you first. "Fear not," saith The Amen, The True and Faithful Witness. I write to you as my Master liveth, upon the word of my royal King, continue in prayer and in watching, and your glorious deliverance is coming. Christ is not far off. A fig, a straw, for all the bits of clay that are risen against us. Ye shall thresh the mountains, and fan them like chaff, (Isa. xli.) If ye slack your hands at your meetings, and your watching to prayer, then it would seem that our Rock hath sold us; but be diligent, and be not discouraged. I charge you in Christ, to rejoice, give thanks, believe, be strong in the Lord. That burning bush in Galloway and Kirkcudbright shall not be burnt to ashes, for the Lord is in the bush. Be not discouraged, that banishment is to be procured by the King's warrant to the Council, against me: the earth is my Lord's; I am filled with his sweet love and running over. I rejoice to hear that ye are on your journey. Such news as I hear, of all your faith and love, rejoice my sad heart.

Pray for me, for they seek my hurt; but I give myself to prayer. The blessing of my Lord, and the blessing of a prisoner of Christ be with you. O chosen and greatly beloved Woman, faint not. Fy, fy, if ye faint now, ye lose a good cause. Double your meetings; cease not for Zion's sake, and hold not your peace till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

Yours, in Christ Jesus his Lord, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXI.

TO THOMAS CORBET.

Dear Friend,—I forget you not. It will be my joy that ye follow after Christ till ye find him. My conscience is a feast of joy to me, that I sought in singleness of heart, for Christ's love, to put you upon the King's highway to our Bridegroom, and our Father's house. Thrice blessed are ye, my dear brother, if ye hold the way.

I believe that ye and Christ once met, I hope ye will not sunder[1] with him. Follow the counsel of the man of God, Mr. William Dalgleish. If ye depart from what I taught you in a hair-breadth, for fear or favor of men, or desire of ease in this world, I take Heaven and earth to witness, that ill shall come upon you

[1] Part from.

in the end. Build not your nest here: this world is a hard, ill-made bed; no rest is in it for your soul. Awake, awake, and make haste to seek that Pearl, Christ, that this world seeth not. Your night, and your Master Christ, will be upon you within a clap; your hand-breadth of time will not bide you. Take Christ, howbeit a storm follow him; howbeit this day be not yours and Christ's, the morrow will be yours and his. I would not exchange the joy of my bonds and imprisonment for Christ, with all the joy of this dirty and foul-skinned world. I have a love-bed with Christ, and am filled with his love.

I desire your wife to do what I write to you. Let her remember how dear Christ will be to her, when her breath turneth cold, and the eye-strings shall break. Oh, how joyful should my soul be, to know that I had brought on a marriage betwixt Christ and that people, few or many; if it be not so, I shall be woe[1] to be a witness against them. Use prayer: love not the world: be humble, and esteem little of yourself: love your enemies, and pray for them: make conscience of speaking truth, when none knoweth but God. I never eat, but I pray for you all. Pray for me. Ye and I shall see one another up in our Father's house. I rejoice to hear that your eye is upon Christ. Follow on, hing[2] on, and quit him not. The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Your affectionate brother, in our Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXII.

TO MR. GEORGE DUNBAR.

Reverend, and dearly beloved in the Lord,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Because your words have strengthened many, I was silent, expecting some lines from you in my bonds; and this is the cause why I wrote not to you, but now I am forced to break off and speak. I never believed till now that there was so much to be found in Christ, on this side of death and of Heaven. Oh, the ravishments of heavenly joy that may be had here, in the small gleanings and comforts that fall from Christ! What fools are we who know not, and consider not the weight and the telling that is in the very earnest-penny, and the first-fruits of our hoped-for harvest! How sweet, how sweet is our infeftment! oh, what then must personal possession be! I find that my Lord Jesus hath not miscooked or spilled[3] this sweet cross—he hath an eye on the fire and the melting gold, to separate the metal and the dross. Oh, how much time would it take me to read my obligations to Jesus my Lord, who will neither have the faith of his own to be burnt to ashes, nor yet will have a poor believer in the fire to be half-raw, like Ephraim's unturned

[1] Grieved. [2] Hang. [3] Spoiled.

cake! This is the wisdom of Him who hath his fire in Zion, and furnace in Jerusalem. I need not either bud[1] or flatter temptations and crosses, nor strive to buy the Devil, or this malicious world by,[2] or redeem their kindness with half a hair-breadth of truth. He who is surety for his servant for good, doth powerfully overrule all that. I see my prison hath neither lock nor door: I am free in my bonds, and my chains are made of rotten straw, they shall not bide one pull of faith. I am sure that they who are in Hell, would exchange their torments with our crosses, suppose they should never be delivered, and give twenty thousand years' torment to boot, to be in our bonds forever; and, therefore, we wrong Christ, who sigh, and fear, and doubt, and despond in them. Our sufferings are washen[3] in Christ's blood, as well as our souls; for Christ's merits brought a blessing to the crosses of the sons of God; and Jesus hath a back-bond[4] of all our temptations, that the free-warders[5] shall come out by law and justice, in respect of the infinite and great sum that the Redeemer paid. Our troubles owe us a free passage through them. Devils and men, and crosses are our debtors, death and all storms are our debtors, to blow our poor tossed bark over the water fraught-free,[6] and to set the travellers on their own known ground—therefore we shall die, and yet live. We are over the water, someway, already: we are married, and our tocher-good[7] is paid: we are already more than conquerors. If the Devil and the world knew how the court with our Lord shall go, I am sure they would hire death to take us off their hand. Our sufferings are the only wreck and ruin of the Black Kingdom; and yet a little, and the Antichrist must play himself with bones and slain bodies of the Lamb's followers; but withal we stand with the hundred forty and four thousand, who are with the Lamb, upon the top of Mount Zion. Antichrist and his followers are down in the valley ground: we have the advantage of the hill; our temptations are always beneath, our waters are beneath our breath—"as dying, and behold we live." I never heard before of a living death, or a quick death but ours: our death is not like the common death; Christ's skill, his handy-work, and a new cast of Christ's admirable art, may be seen in our quick death. I bless the Lord, that all our troubles come through Christ's fingers, and that he casteth sugar among them, and casteth in some ounce-weights of Heaven, and of the Spirit of glory, that resteth on suffering believers, into our cup, in which there is no taste of Hell. My dear brother, ye know all these better than I. I send water to the sea, to speak of these things to you; but it easeth me, to desire you to help me to pay my tribute of praise to Jesus. Oh, what praises I owe

[1] Bribe. [2] Off. [3] Washed.
[4] A bond given by one to the person from whom he has received a previous bond, engaging that the person who gave the previous bond shall not, in consequence of it, come to any loss. [5] Prisoners who have acquired a right to be set at liberty.
[6] Freight-free. [7] Marriage-portion.

him! I would, I were in my free heritage, that I might begin to pay my debts to Jesus.

I entreat for your prayers and praises. I forget not you.

Your brother and fellow-sufferer,

In and for Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 17, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXIII.

TO JOHN FLEMING, BAILLIE OF LEITH.

WORTHY SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—The Lord hath brought me safe to this strange town. Blessed be his holy name, I find his cross easy and light, and I hope that he will be with his poor sold Joseph, who is separated from his brethren. His comforts have abounded towards me, as if Christ thought shame,[1] (if I may speak so,) to be in the common of[2] such a poor man as I am, and would not have me lose anything in his errands. My enemies have, contrary to their intention, made me more blessed, and have put me in a sweeter possession of Christ than ever I had before: only the memory of the fair days I had with my Well-beloved, amongst the flock intrusted to me, keepeth me low, and soureth my unseen joy; but it must be so, and He is wise who tutoreth me in this way: for that which my brethren have, and I want, and others of this world have, I am content; my faith will frist[3] God my happiness. No son is offended that his father give him not hire twice a-year; for he is to abide in the house, when the inheritance is to be divided:—it is better that God's children live upon hope, than upon hire.

Thus remembering my love to your worthy and kind wife; I bless you and her, and all yours, in the Lord's name.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 20, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXIV.

TO WILLIAM GLENDINNING, BAILLIE OF KIRKCUDBRIGHT.

WORTHY SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am well, honor be to God! and as well as a rejoicing prisoner of Christ can be, hoping that one day He, for whom I now suffer, will enlarge me, and put me above the threatenings of men.

I am sometimes sad, heavy, and casten down, at the memory of the fair days I had with Christ, in Anwoth, Kirkcudbright, etc. The remembrance of a feast increaseth hunger in a hungry man;

[1] Were ashamed. [2] Under obligation to. [3] Grant delay in paying.

but who knoweth, but our Lord will yet cover a table in the wilderness to his hungry bairns, and build the old waste places in Scotland, and bring home Zion's captives? I desire to see no more glorious sight, till I see the Lamb on his throne, than to see Mount Zion all green with grass, and the dew lying upon the tops of the grass, and the crown put upon Christ's head in Scotland again: and I believe it shall be so, and that Christ will mow down his enemies, and fill the pits with their dead bodies.

I find people here dry and unco. A man pointed at for suffering dare not be countenanced; so that I am like to sit my lone[2] upon the ground: but my Lord payeth me well home again; for I have neither tongue, nor pen, nor heart to express the sweetness and excellency of the love of Christ. Christ's honeycombs drop honey and floods of consolation upon my soul: my chains are gold; Christ's cross is all over-gilded and perfumed: his prison is the garden and orchard of my delights: I would go through burning quick to my lovely Christ: I sleep in his arms all the night, and my head betwixt his breasts: my Well-beloved is altogether lovely: this is all nothing, to that which my soul hath felt. Let no man, for my cause, scaur[3] at Christ's cross. If my stipend, place, country, credit, had been an earldom, a kingdom, ten kingdoms, and a whole earth; all were too little for the crown and sceptre of my royal King. Mine enemies, mine enemies have made me blessed. They have sent me to the Bridegroom's chamber. Love is his banner over me. I live a king's life. I want nothing but Heaven, and possession of the crown: my earnest is great; Christ is no niggard to me. Dear brother, be for the Lord Jesus, and his heart-broken Bride.

I need not, I hope, remember my distressed brother to your care. Remember my love to your wife. Let Christ want nothing of us; his garments shall be rolled in the blood of the slain of Scotland.

Grace, grace be with you. Pray for Christ's prisoner.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 21, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXV.

TO EARLSTON, YOUNGER.

Much honored Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am well; Christ triumpheth in me, blessed be his name. I have all things. I burden no man. I see that this earth and the fulness thereof is my Father's. Sweet, sweet is the cross of my Lord. The blessing of God upon the cross of my Lord Jesus! My enemies have contributed (beside their design), to make me blessed. This is my palace, not my prison; especially, when my

[1] Strange. [2] By myself alone. [3] Boggle.

Lord shineth and smileth upon his poor afflicted and sold Joseph who is separated from his brethren. But often he hideth himself, and there is a day of law, and a court of challenges[1] within me —I know not if fenced[2] in God's name—but, oh, my neglects! oh, my unseen guiltiness! I imagined that a sufferer for Christ kept the keys of Christ's treasure, and might take out his heart-full of comforts when he pleased; but I see, a sufferer and a witness shall be holden at the door, as well as another poor sinner, and glad to eat with the bairns, and to take the by-board.[3]

This cross hath let me see, that Heaven is not at the next door, and that it is a castle not soon taken. I see, also, that it is neither pain nor art to play the hypocrite. We have all learned to sell ourselves for double price; and to make the people, who call ten twenty, and twenty an hundred, esteem us half gods, or men fallen out of the clouds; but, oh, sincerity, sincerity, if I knew what sincerity meaneth!

Sir, lay the foundation thus, and ye shall not soon shrink, nor be shaken. Make tight work at the bottom, and your ship shall ride against all storms, if withal your anchor be fastened upon good ground, I mean within the veil. And verily I think this is all, to gain Christ: all other things are shadows, dreams, fancies, and nothing.

Sir, remember my love to your mother. I pray for mercy and grace to her; I wish her on-going toward Heaven: as I promised to write, so show her that I want nothing in my Lord's service—Christ will not be in such a poor man's common as mine.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 22, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXVI.

TO JOHN GORDON.

WORTHY, AND DEAR BROTHER,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I have been too long in writing to you, but multitude of letters taketh much time from me.

I bless His great name whom I serve in the Spirit, that if it come to voting amongst angels and men, how excellent and sweet Christ is, even in his reproaches and in his cross, I cannot but vote with the first, that all that is in him, both cross and crown, kisses and glooms,[4] embracements and frownings and strokes, are sweet and glorious. God send me no more happiness in Heaven, or out of Heaven, than Christ: for I find this world, when I have looked upon it on both sides, within and without, and when I have seen even the laughing and lovely side of it, to be but a fool's idol, a clay prison;—Lord, let it not be the nest that my hope

[1] Accusations. [2] Constituted. [3] Side-table. [4] Forbidding looks.

buildeth in. I have now cause to judge my part of this earth not worth a blast of smoke, or a mouthful of brown bread. I wish that my hope may take a running-leap, and skip over time's pleasure, sin's plastering and gold-foil,[1] this vain earth, and rest upon my Lord. Oh, how great is our night-darkness in this wilderness! To have any conceit at all of this world, is, as if a man should close his handful of water, and, holding his hand in the river, say that all the water of the flood is his, as if it were, indeed, all within the compass of his hand:—who would not laugh at thoughts of such a crack-brain? Verily, they have but an handful of water, and are but like a child clasping his two hands about a night-shadow, who idolize any created hope, but God. I now lightly,[2] and put the price of a dream, or fable, or black[3] nothing, upon all things, but God, and that desirable and love-worthy One, my Lord Jesus. Let all the world be nothing, (for nothing was their seed and mother,) and let God be all things.

My very dear brother, know that ye are as near Heaven as ye are far from yourself, and far from the love of a bewitching and whorish world:—for this world, in its gain and glory, is but the great and notable common whore, that all the sons of men have been in fancy and lust withal these 5000 years. The children, that they have begotten with this uncouth and lustful lover, are but vanity, dreams, gold-imaginations, and night thoughts. There is no good ground here, under the covering of Heaven, for men and poor wearied souls to set down their foot upon. Oh, He who is called God, that One whom they term Jesus Christ, is worth the having indeed, even if I had given away all without my eye-holes, my soul, and myself for sweet Jesus my Lord! Oh, let the claim be cancelled, that the creatures have to me, except that claim my Lord Jesus hath to me! Oh, that he would claim poor me, my silly, light, and worthless soul! Oh, that he would pursue his claim to the utmost point, and not want me! for it is my pain, and remediless sorrow to want him. I see nothing in this life, but sinks, and mires, and dreams, and beguiling ditches, and ill ground for us to build upon.

I am fully persuaded of Christ's victory in Scotland, but I fear that this land be not yet ripe and white for mercy. Yet I dare be halver, (upon my salvation,) with the losses of the Church of Scotland, that her foes, after noon, shall sing dool[4] and sorrow for evermore, and that her joy shall once again be cried up, and her sky shall clear:—but vengeance and burning shall be to her adversaries, and the sinners of this land. Oh, that we could be awakened to prayers and humiliation! Then should our sun shine like seven suns in the Heaven; then should the temple of Christ be builded upon the mountain tops, and the land, from coast to coast, should be filled with the glory of the Lord.

Brother, your day-task is wearing short; your hour-glass of this

[1] Gold-leaf. [2] Lightly esteem. [3] Utter. [4] Wail.

span-length and hand-breadth of life will quickly pass; and, therefore, take order and course with matters betwixt you and Christ, before it come to open pleading:—there are no quarters to be had of Christ, in open judgment. I know, that ye see your thread wearing short, and that there are not many inches to the thread's end; and, therefore, lose not time.

Remember me, his prisoner, that it would please the Lord to bring me again amongst you with abundance of the Gospel.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXVII.

TO WILLIAM RIGGE, OF ATHERNIE.

WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED SIR,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—How sad a prisoner should I be, if I knew not that my Lord Jesus had the keys of the prison himself, and that his death and blood have bought a blessing to our crosses, as well as to ourselves? I am sure that troubles have no prevailing right over us, if they be but our Lord's serjeants, to keep us in ward, while we are in this side of Heaven. I am persuaded also, that they shall not go over the bound-road,[1] nor enter into Heaven with us; for they find no welcome there, where "there is no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain;" and, therefore, we shall leave them behind us. Oh, if[2] I could get as good a gate[3] of sin, even this woful and wretched body of sin, as I get of Christ's cross! Nay, indeed, I think the cross beareth both me and itself, rather than I it, in comparison of the tyranny of the lawless flesh, and wicked neighbor, that dwelleth beside Christ's new creature. But, oh, this is that which presseth me down, and paineth me. Jesus Christ in his saints sitteth neighbor with an ill second, corruption, deadness, coldness, pride, lust, worldliness, self-love, security, falsehood, and a world of moe the like, which I find in me, that are daily doing violence to the New Man. Oh, but we have cause to carry low sails, and to cleave fast to free grace, free, free grace! Blessed be our Lord that ever that way was found out. If my one foot were in Heaven, and my soul half in, if free-will and corruption were absolute lords of me, I should never win[4] wholly in. Oh, but the sweet, new, and living way, that Christ hath struck up to our home, is a safe way! I find now, presence and access a greater dainty than before; but yet the Bridegroom looketh through the lattice, and through the hole of the door. Oh, if[2] he and I were on fair dry land together, on the other side of the water.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Sept. 30, 1637.

[1] Boundary-line. [2] Oh, that. [3] Way. [4] Get.

LETTER CCLXXVIII.

TO JAMES MURRAY.

DEAR BROTHER,—I received your letter.—I am in good health of body, but far better in my soul. I find my Lord no worse than his word. "I will be with him in trouble," is made good to me now. He heareth the sighing of the prisoner. Brother, I am comforted in my royal Prince and King. The world knoweth not our life, it is a mystery to them. We have the sunny side of the world, and our paradise is far above theirs;—yea, our weeping is above their laughing, which is but like the crackling of thorns under a pot; and, therefore, we have good cause to fight it out, for the day of our laureation[1] is approaching. I find my prison the sweetest place that ever I was in. My Lord Jesus is kind to me, and hath taken the mask off his face, and is content to quit me all by-gones.[2] I dare not complain of him. And for my silence, I lay it before Christ. I hope it will be a speaking silence. He who knoweth what I would, knoweth that my soul desireth no more, than that King Jesus may be great in the north of Scotland, in the south, and in the east and west, through my sufferings for the freedom of my Lord's house and kingdom. If I could keep good quarters, in time to come, with Christ, I would fear nothing. But, oh, oh, I complain of my woful outbreakings! I tremble at the remembrance of a new out-cast[3] betwixt him and me; and I have cause, when I consider what sickness and sad days I have had for His absence who is now come. I find that Christ cannot be long unkind: our Joseph's bowels yearn within him, he cannot smother love long, it must break out at length. Praise, praise with me, brother, and desire my acquaintance to help me. I dare not conceal his love to my soul; I wish you all a part of my feast, that my Lord Jesus may be honored. I allow you not to hide Christ's bounty to me, when ye meet with such as know Christ.

Ye write nothing to me. What are the cruel mercies of the prelates toward me? The ministers of this town, as I hear, intend that I shall be more strictly confined, or else transported, because they find some people affect me. Grace be with you.

Yours, in the sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Nov. 21, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXIX.

TO MR. JOHN FERGUSHILL.

REVEREND, AND WELL-BELOVED IN OUR LORD JESUS,—I must still provoke you to write by my lines, whereat ye need not won-

[1] The act or state of having academic degrees conferred.
[2] Matters by-past.
[3] Quarrel.

der; for the cross is full of talk, and speak it must, either good or bad: neither can grief be silent.

I have no dittay[1] nor indictment to bring against Christ's cross, seeing he hath made a friendly agreement betwixt me and it, and we are in terms of love together. If my former miscarriages, and my now silent Sabbaths, seem to me to speak wrath from the Lord, I dare say, it is but Satan borrowing the use and loan of my cowardly and feeble apprehensions, which start at straws. I know that faith is not so faint and foolish as to tremble at every false alarm; yet I gather this out of it, Blessed are they who are graced of God to guide a cross well, and that there is some art required therein. I pray God that I may not be so ill friendstead,[2] as that Christ my Lord should leave me to be my own tutor, and my own physician. Shall I not think that my Lord Jesus, who deserveth his own place very well, will take his own place upon him as it becometh him, and that he will fill his own chair? for in this is his office to comfort us, and those that are casten down, in all their tribulations, (2 Cor. i. 4.) Alas! I know that I am a fool, to seek a hole or defect in Christ's way with my soul. If I have not a stock to present to Christ, at his appearance, yet I pray God, that I may be able, with joy, and faith, and constancy, to show the Captain of my salvation, in that day, a bloody head, which I received in his service. Howbeit my faith hang by a small tack[3] and thread, I hope that the tack shall not break; and, howbeit my Lord get no service of me but broken wishes, yet I trust that those will be accepted upon Christ's account. I have nothing to comfort me, but that I say, "Oh! will the Lord disappoint an hungry on-waiter?" The smell of Christ's wine and apples, which surpass the up-taking of dull sense, bloweth upon my soul, and I get no more for the meantime. I am sure, that to let a famishing body see meat, and give him none of it, is a double pain; our Lord's love is not so cruel, as to let a poor man see Christ and Heaven, and never give him more for want of money to buy: nay, I rather think Christ such fair market wares, as buyers may have without money and without price. And thus I know, that it shall not stand upon my want of money: for Christ upon his own charges must buy my wedding garment, and redeem the inheritance which I have forfeited, and give his word for one the like of me, who am not law-biding[4] of myself. Poor folks must either borrow or beg from the rich; and the only thing that commendeth sinners to Christ, is extreme necessity and want. Christ's love is ready to make and provide a ransom and money for a poor body, who hath lost his purse:—"Ho, ye that have no money, come, and buy," (Isa. lv. 1,)—that is the poor man's market.

Now, brother, I see that old crosses would have done nothing to me; and, therefore, Christ hath taken a new, fresh rod to me, that seemeth to talk with my soul and make me tremble. I have

[1] Charge. [2] Befriended. [3] Stitch. [4] Able to stand law.

often more ado now with faith, when I lose my compass, and am blown on a rock, than those who are my beholders, standing upon the shore, are aware of. A counsel to a sick man is sooner given than taken. "Lord, send the wearied man a borrowed bed from Christ." I think often that it is after-supper with me, and I am heavy. Oh, but I would sleep soundly, with Christ's left hand under my head, and his right hand embracing me. The Devil could not spill[1] that bed. When I consider how tenderly Christ hath cared for me in this prison, I think that he hath handled me as the bairn that is pitied and bemoaned. I desire no more till I be in Heaven, but such a feast and fill of Christ's love as I would have; this love would be fair and adorning passments,[2] which would beautify and set forth my black, unpleasant cross. I cannot tell, my dear brother, what a great load I would bear, if I had a hearty fill of the love of that lovely One, Christ Jesus. Oh, if[3] ye would seek and pray for that to me! I would give Christ all his love-styles and titles of honor, if he would give me but this; nay, I would sell myself, if I could, for that love.

I have been waiting to see what friends of place and power would do for us; but when the Lord looseneth the pins of his own tabernacle, he will have himself to be acknowledged as the only builder up thereof; and, therefore, I would take back again my hope, that I lent and laid in pawn in men's hands, and gave it wholly to Christ. It is no time for me now to set up idols of my own. It were a pity to give an ounce-weight of hope to any besides Christ. I think him well worthy of all my hope, though it were as weighty as both Heaven and earth. Happy were I if I had anything that Christ would seek or accept of; but now, alas! I see not what service I can do to him, except it be to talk a little, and babble upon a piece of paper, concerning the love of Christ. I am often as if my faith were wadset,[4] so that I cannot command it; and then, when he hideth himself, I run to the other extreme, in making each wing and toe of my case as big as a mountain of iron; and then misbelief[5] can spin out an hell of heavy and desponding thoughts; then Christ seeketh law-borrows[6] of my unbelieving apprehensions, and chargeth me to believe his day-light at midnight. But I make pleas[7] with Christ, though it be ill my common[8] so to do. It were my happiness, when I am in this house-of-wine, and when I find a feast-day, if I could "hearken, and hear for the time to come," (Isa. xlii. 23.) But I see that we must be off our feet in wading a deep water; and then Christ's love findeth timous[9] employment, at such a dead lift as that; and, besides, after broken brows, bairns learn to walk more circumspectly. If I come to Heaven any way, howbeit like a tired traveller, upon my Guide's shoulder, it is good enough for those who have no legs of their own for such a journey. I never

1 Spoil. 2 Stripes of lace sewed on clothes, ornaments.
3 Oh, that. 4 Alienated. 5 Erroneous faith.
6 Legal security from injury, obtained from one against whom the peace is sworn.
7 Controversies. 8 Ill becomes me. 9 Timely.

thought there had been need of so much wrestling to win to the top of that steep mountain, as now I find.

Wo is me for this broken and back-sliding Church; it is like an old bowing wall, leaning to the one side, and there are none of all her sons who will set a prop under her. I know that I need not bemoan Christ; for he careth for his own honor more than I can do; but who can blame me to be wo,[1] (if I had grace so to be,) to see my Well-beloved's fair face spitted upon, and his own crown plucked off his head, and the ark of God taken and carried in the Philistines' cart, and the kine put to carry it which will let it fall to the ground? The Lord put-to his own helping hand! I would desire you to prepare yourself for a fight with beasts: ye will not get leave to steal quietly to Heaven, in Christ's company, without a conflict and a cross.

Remember my bonds, and praise my Second, and Fellow-prisoner, Christ. Grace be with you.

Yours, in Christ Jesus his Lord, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

LETTER CCLXXX.

TO WILLIAM GLENDINNING.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Your case is unknown to me, whether ye be yet our Lord's prisoner at Wigton, or not: however it be, I know that our Lord Jesus hath been inquiring for you; and that he hath honored you to bear his chains, which is the golden end of his cross; and so hath waled[2] out a chosen and honorable cross for you. I wish you much joy and comfort of it; for I have nothing to say of Christ's cross but much good; I hope that my ill word shall never meet either Christ or his sweet and easy cross. I know that he seeketh of us an out-cast[3] with this house of clay, this mother prison, this earth, that we love full well; and, verily, when Christ snuffeth my candle, and causeth my light to shine upward, it is one of my greatest wonders, that dirt and clay hath so much court[4] with a soul not made of clay; and that our soul goeth out of kind so far as to make an idol of this earth, such a deformed harlot, as that it should wrong Christ of our love. How fast, how fast doth our ship sail! And how fair a wind hath time, to blow us off these coasts, and this land of dying and perishing things! and, alas! our ship saileth one way, and fleeth[5] many miles in one hour, to hasten us upon eternity; and our love and hearts are sailing close backover,[6] and swimming towards ease, lawless pleasure, vain honor, perishing riches, and to build a fool's nest, I know not where, and to lay our eggs within the sea-mark, and fasten our

[1] Grieved. [2] Selected. [3] Quarrel.
[4] Influence. [5] Flieth. [6] Backwards.

bits of broken anchors upon the worst ground in the world, this fleeting and perishing life; and in the mean while, time and tide carry us upon another life, and there is daily less and less oil in our lamps, and less and less sand in our watch-glass.[1] Oh, what a wise course were it for us to look away from the false beauty of our borrowed prison, and to mind, and eye, and lust for our country! Lord, Lord, take us home!

And for myself:—I think, if a poor, weak, dying sheep seek for an old dyke,[2] and the lee side of a hill, in a storm, I have cause to long for a covert from this storm, in Heaven; I know none will take my room over my head there. But, certainly, sleepy bodies would be at rest and a well-made bed, and an old crazed bark at a shore, and a weary traveller at home, and a breathless horse at the rink's[3] end. I see nothing in this life but sin, and the sour fruits of sin: and, oh, what a burden is sin! And what a slavery and miserable bondage is it, to be at the nod, and yeas and nays, of such a lord-master as a body of sin! Truly, when I think of it, it is a wonder that Christ maketh not fire and ashes of such a dry branch as I am. I would often lie down under Christ's feet, and bid him trample upon me, when I consider my guiltiness. But seeing he hath sworn that sin shall not loose his unchangeable covenant, I keep house-room amongst the rest of the ill-learned[4] bairns, and must cumber the Lord of the House, with the rest, till my Lord take the fetters off legs and arms, and destroy this body of sin, and make a hole or breach in this cage of earth, that the bird may flee[5] out, and the imprisoned soul be at liberty. In the mean time, the least imitation of Christ's love is sweet, and the hope of marriage with the Bridegroom holdeth me in some joyful on-waiting, that when Christ's summer-birds shall sing upon the branches of the tree of life, I shall be tuned by God himself, to help them to sing the home-coming of our Well-beloved and his bride to their house together. When I think of this, I think winters and summers, and years and days, and time, do me a pleasure, that they shorten this untwisted and weak thread of my life, and that they put sin and miseries by-hand,[6] and that they shall carry me to my Bridegroom in a clap.

Dear brother, pray for me, that it would please the Lord of the vineyard to give me room to preach his righteousness again to the great congregation.

Grace, grace be with you. Remember me to your wife.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, 1637.

[1] Hour-glass. [2] Wall. [3] Course's. [4] Ill-bred.
[5] Fly. [6] *To put by-hand*, quickly to despatch, as work, etc.

LETTER CCLXXXI.

FOR MARION MACKNAUGHT.

My dear, and well-beloved Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am well, honor to God. I have been before a court set up within me of terrors and challenges;[1] but my sweet Lord Jesus hath taken the mask off his face, and said, "Kiss thy fill;" and I will not smother nor conceal the kindness of my King, Jesus. He hath broken in upon the poor prisoner's soul like the swelling of Jordan. I am bank and brim-full; a great, high spring-tide of the consolations of Christ hath overflowed me. I would not give my weeping for the Fourteen Prelates' laughter. They have sent me here to feast with my King. His spikenard casteth a sweet smell. The Bridegroom's love hath run away with my heart; Oh, love, love, love! Oh, sweet are my royal King's chains! I care not for fire nor torture. How sweet were it to me to swim the salt sea for my new lover, my second husband, my first Lord! I charge you in the name of God, not to fear the wild beasts that entered into the vineyard of the Lord of hosts; the false prophet is the tail: God shall cut the tail from Scotland. Take your comfort and droop not, despond not.

Pray for my poor flock: I would take a penance on my soul for their salvation. I fear that the entering of a hireling upon my labors there, will cut off my life with sorrow. There I wrestled with the Angel, and prevailed. Wood, trees, meadows, and hills, are my witnesses, that I drew on a fair meeting betwixt Christ and Anwoth.

My love to your husband, to dear Carlton, to my beloved brother Knockbrex. Forget not Christ's prisoner. I long for a letter under your own hand.

Your friend, and Christ's Prisoner, S. R.

Aberdeen, Nov. 22.

LETTER CCLXXXII.

TO THE LADY ROBERTLAND.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I shall be glad to hear that your soul prospereth, and that fruit groweth upon you after the Lord's husbandry and pains in his rod, that hath not been a stranger to you from your youth. It is the Lord's kindness that he will take the scum off us in the fire: who knoweth how needful winnowing is to us, and what dross must be taken away, ere we enter into the Kingdom of God? So narrow is the entry to Heaven, that our knots, our bunches, and lumps of pride,

[1] Self-accusations.

and self-love, and idol love, and world love, must be hammered off us, that we may thring in,[1] stooping low, and creeping through that narrow and thorny entry.

And now, for myself:—I find it the most sweet and heavenly life, to take up house and dwelling at Christ's fireside, and set down my tent upon Christ, that Foundation-stone, which is sure and faithful ground, and hard under foot. Oh, if[2] I could win to[3] it, and proclaim myself not the world's debtor, nor a lover obliged to it; and that I mind not to hire or bud[4] this world's love any longer; but defy both the kindness and feud of God's whole creation whatsoever; especially the lower vault and clay-part of God's creatures, this vain earth! For what hold I of his world? A borrowed lodging, and some years' house-room, and bread, and water, and fire, and bed, and candle, etc., are all a part of the pension of my King and Lord, to whom I owe thanks, and not to a creature.

I thank God, that God is God, and Christ is Christ, and the earth the earth, and the Devil the Devil, and the world the world, and that sin is sin, and that everything is what it is: because he hath taught me in my wilderness not to shuffle my Lord Jesus, nor to intermix him with creature-vanities; nor to spin or twine Christ or his sweet love into one web, or into one thread with the world, and the things thereof. Oh, if[2] I could hold and keep Christ all alone, and mix him with nothing! Oh, if[2] I could cry down the price and weight of my cursed self, and cry up the price of Christ, and double, and triple, and augment and heighten to millions the price and worth of Christ! I am, if I durst speak so, and might lawfully complain, so hungeredly tutored by Christ Jesus, my liberal Lord, that his nice love, which my soul would be in hands with, flieth me; and yet I am trained on to love Him, and lust, and long, and die for his love whom I cannot see. It is a wonder to pine away with love for a covered and hid lover, and to be hungered with his love, so as a poor soul cannot get his fill of hunger for Christ. It is hard to be hungered of hunger, whereof such abundance for other things is in the world. But sure if we were tutors, and stewards, and masters, and lord-carvers of Christ's love, we should be more lean, and worse fed than we are. Our meat doeth us the more good that Christ keepeth the keys, and that the wind and the air of Christ's sweet breathing, and of the influence of his Spirit is locked up in the hands of the good pleasure of Him who bloweth where he listeth.

I see that there is a sort of impatient patience required in the want of Christ, as to his manifestations and waiting on. They thrive who wait on his love, and the blowing of it, and the turning of his gracious wind; and they thrive who in that on-waiting make haste and din, and much ado, for their lost and hidden Lord Jesus. However it be, God feed me with him any way. If he would come in, I should not dispute the matter where he got a

[1] Press or squeeze in. [2] Oh, that. [3] Attain to. [4] Bribe.

hole, or how he opened the lock. I should be content that Christ and I met, suppose he should stand on the other side of Hell's lake, and cry to me, "Either put in your foot and come through, else ye shall not have me at all." But what fools are we, in the taking up of him and of his dealing! He hath a gate[1] of his own, beyond the thoughts of men, that no foot hath skill to follow him. But we are still ill scholars, and will go in at Heaven's gate, wanting the half of our lesson, and shall still be bairns so long as we are under time's hands, and till eternity cause a sun to arise in our souls that shall give us wit. We may see how we spill[2] and mar our own fair heaven and our salvation, and how Christ is every day putting in one bone or other in those fallen souls of ours, into the right place again; and that, on this side of the New Jerusalem, we shall still have need of forgiving and healing. I find crosses to be Christ's carved work, that he marketh out for us; and that with crosses he figureth and portrayeth us to his own image, cutting away pieces of our ill and corruption. "Lord, cut; Lord, carve; Lord, wound; Lord, do anything that may perfect the Father's image in us, and make us meet for glory."

Pray for me,—I forget not you,—that our Lord would be pleased to lend me house-room, to preach his righteousness, and tell what I have heard and seen of him. Forget not Zion that is now in Christ's caums[3] and in his forge. God bring her out new work. Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Jan. 4, 1638.

LETTER CCLXXXIII.

TO MY LORD LOUDON.

RIGHT HONORABLE, AND MY VERY WORTHY LORD,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Hearing of your Lordship's zeal and courage for Christ our Lord, in owning his honorable cause, I am bold, (and I plead pardon for it,) to speak on paper, by a line or two, to your Lordship, (since I have not access in any other way,) beseeching your Lordship, by the mercies of God, and by the everlasting peace of your soul, and by the tears and prayers of our Mother-church, to go on as ye have so worthily begun, in purging the Lord's house in this land, and pulling down the sticks of Antichrist's filthy nest, this wretched prelacy, and that black kingdom, whose wicked aims have ever been, and still are, to make this fat world the only compass they would have Christ and religion to sail by; and to mount up the Man of Sin, their godfather the Pope of Rome, upon the highest stair of Christ's throne, and to make a velvet church, (in regard of parliament grandeur and worldly pomp, whereof always their stinking breath smelleth,) and

[1] Way. [2] Spoil. [3] Moulds.

put Christ and truth in sackcloth and prison to eat the bread of adversity, and drink the water of affliction. Half an eye of any, not misted with the darkness of Antichristian smoke, may see it thus in this land; and now our Lord hath begun to awaken the nobles and others, to plead for borne-down Christ and his weeping Gospel.

My dear and noble Lord, the eye of Christ is upon you; the eyes of many noble, many holy, many learned and worthy ones, in our neighbor churches about, are upon you. This poor Church, your Mother and Christ's spouse, is holding up her hands and heart to God for you, and doth beseech you with tears, to plead for her Husband, his kingly sceptre, and for the liberties that her Lord and King hath given to her as to a free Kingdom, that oweth spiritual tribute to none on earth, as being the free-born Princess and Daughter to the King of kings. This is a cause that, before God, his angels, the world, before sun and moon, needeth not to blush. Oh, what glory and true honor is it, to lend Christ your hand and service, and to be amongst the repairers of the breaches of Zion's walls, and to help to build the old waste places, and stretch forth the curtains, and strengthen the stakes of Christ's tent in this land!

Oh, blessed are they, who, when Christ is driven away, will bring him back again, and lend him lodging! And blessed are ye of the Lord! Your name and honor shall never rot nor wither in Heaven, (at least,) if ye deliver the Lord's sheep, that have been scattered in the dark and cloudy day, out of the hands of strange lords and hirelings, who with rigor and cruelty have caused them to eat the pastures trodden upon with their foul feet, and to drink muddy water; and who have spun out such a world of yards of indifferencies in God's worship, to make and weave a web for the Antichrist, (which shall not keep any from the cold,) as they mind nothing else, but that, by the bringing in of the Pope's foul tail first upon us, (their wretched and beggarly ceremonies,) they may thrust in after them the Antichrist's legs and thighs, and his belly, head, and shoulders; and then cry down Christ and the Gospel, and up the merchandise and wares of the Great Whore. Fear not, my worthy Lord, to give yourself, and all ye have, out for Christ and his Gospel. No man dare say, who did ever thus hazard for Christ, that Christ paid him not his hundred-fold in this life duly, and, in the life to come, life everlasting. This is his own truth that ye now plead for; for God and man cannot but commend you, to beg justice from a just prince for oppressed Christ; and to plead that Christ, who is the King's Lord, may be heard in a free court to speak for himself, when the standing and established laws of our nation can strongly plead for Christ's crown in the pulpits, and his chair as Lawgiver in the free government of his own house. But Christ will never be content and pleased with this land, neither shall his hot, fiery indignation be turned away, so long as the Prelate (the man that lay in Antichrist's foul womb, and the Antichrist's lord-bailiff,) shall

sit lord-carver in the courts of the Lord Jesus. The Prelate is both the egg and the nest to cleck[1] and bring forth Popery. Plead, therefore, in Christ's behalf, for the plucking down of the nest, and the crushing of the egg; and let Christ's kingly office suffer no more unworthy indignities. Be valiant for your royal King, Jesus; contend for him; your adversaries shall be moth-eaten worms, and die as men. Christ and his honor now lie on your shoulders, let him not fall to the grond. Cast your eye upon Him who is quickly coming to decide all the controversies in Zion. And remember that the sand in your night-glass[2] will run out; time with wings will flee away, eternity is hard upon you; and what will Christ's love-smiles, and the light of his lovely and soul-delighting countenance be to you in that day, when God shall take up in his right hand this little lodge of heaven, (like as a shepherd lifteth up his little tent,) and fold together the two leaves of this tent, and put the earth and all the plenishing[3] of it into a fire, and turn this clay-idol, the god of Adam's sons, into smoke and white ashes! Oh, what hire, and how many worlds would many then give to have a favorable decreet[4] of the Judge? or what moneys would they not give, to buy a mountain, to be a grave above both soul and body, to hide them from the awesome[5] looks of an angry Lord and Judge? I hope that your Lordship thinketh upon this, and that ye mind loyalty to Christ, and to the King both.

Now the very God of peace,—the only wise God,—establish and strengthen you upon the Rock laid in Zion.

Your Lordship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Aberdeen, Jan. 4, 1638.

LETTER CCLXXXIV.

TO THE HONORABLE, REVEREND, AND WELL-BELOVED PROFESSORS OF CHRIST AND HIS TRUTH IN SINCERITY, IN IRELAND.

DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD, AND PARTAKERS OF THE HEAVENLY CALLING,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you, from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ.

I always, but most of all now in my bonds, (most sweet bonds for Christ my Lord,) rejoice to hear of your faith and love, and to hear that our King, our Well-beloved, our Bridegroom, without tiring, stayeth still to woo you, as his wife; and that persecutions, and mockings of sinners have not chased away the Wooer from the house.

I persuade you in the Lord, that the men of God, now scattered and driven from you, put you upon the right scent and pursuit of

[1] Hatch. [2] Hour-glass. [3] Furniture. [4] Sentence. [5] Awful.

Christ; and, my salvation on it, (if ten heavens were mine,) if this way, this way that I now suffer for, this way that the world nicknameth and reproacheth, and no other way, be not the King's gate [1] to Heaven; and I shall never see God's face, (and, alas, I were a beguiled wretch if it were so!) if this be not the only saving way to Heaven. Oh, that you would take the word of a prisoner of Christ for it, nay I know you have the greatest King's word for it, that it shall not be your wisdom to speer [2] out another Christ, or another way of worshipping him, than is now savingly revealed to you. Therefore, though I never saw your faces, let me be pardoned to write to you, ye honorable persons, ye faithful pastors, yet amongst the flocks, and ye sincere professors of Christ's truth, or any weak, tired strayers, who cast but half an eye after the Bridegroom, if possibly I could, by any weak experience, confirm and strengthen you in this good way, everywhere spoken against. I can with the greatest assurance, (to the honor of our highest and greatest, and dearest Lord, let it be spoken,) assert, (though I be but a child in Christ, and scarce able to walk but by a hold, and the meanest, and less than the least of saints,) that we do not come nigh, by twenty degrees, to the due love and estimation of that Fairest amongst the sons of men. For if it were possible that Heaven, yea, ten heavens, were laid in the balance with Christ, I would think the smell of his breath above them all. Sure I am that he is the far best half of Heaven; yea, he is all Heaven, and more than all Heaven; and my testimony of him is, that ten lives of black sorrow, ten deaths, ten hells of pain, ten furnaces of brimstone, and all exquisite torments, were all too little for Christ, if our suffering could be a hire to buy him; and, therefore, faint not in your sufferings and hazards for him. I proclaim and cry, Hell, sorrow, and shame upon all lusts, upon all by-lovers [3] that would take Christ's room over his head,[4] in this little inch of love, of these narrow souls of ours, that is due to sweetest Jesus. O highest, O fairest, O dearest Lord Jesus, take thine own from all bastard lovers. Oh, that we could wadset [5] and sell all our part of time's glory, and time's good things, for a lease and tack [6] of Christ for all eternity! Oh, how are we misted [7] and mired with the love of things that are on this side of time, and on this side of death's water! Where can we find a match to Christ, or an equal, or a better than he, among created things? Ob, this world is out of all conceit, and all love with our Well-beloved! Oh, that I could sell my laughter, joy, ease, and all for him; and be content with a straw bed, and bread by weight, and water by measure, in the camp of our weeping Christ! I know that his sackcloth and ashes are better than the fool's laughter, which is like the crackling of thorns under a pot.

1 Way. 2 *To speer out*, to find out by diligent inquiry. 3 Paramours.
4 *To take a house, farm, etc., over a tenant's head*, to offer more for it than the adequate rent which the tenant gives, and thus to put him out.
5 *To wadset*, to alienate, under a right of reversion, applied to heritable property.
6 A lease. 7 Bewildered.

But, alas! we do not harden our faces against the cold north storms which blow upon Christ's fair face. We love well summer religion, and to be that which sin has made us, even as thin skinned as if we were made of white paper; and would fain be carried to Heaven in a close-covered chariot, wishing from our hearts that Christ would give us surety, and his hand-write[1] and his seal for nothing but a fair summer, until we be landed in at Heaven's gates.

How many of us have been here deceived, and have fainted in the day of trial! Amongst you there are some of this stamp. I shall be sorry if my acquaintance A. T. hath left you: I will not believe that he dare to stay from Christ's side. I desire that ye show him this from me; for I loved him once in Christ, neither can I change my mind suddenly of him.

But the truth is, that many of you, and too many, also, of your neighbor Church of Scotland, have been like a tenant that sitteth mail-free[2] and knoweth not his holding[3] whill his rights[4] be questioned. And now I am persuaded, that it will be asked at every one of us, on what terms we brook[5] Christ; for we have sitten long mail-free. We found Christ without a wet foot; and he, and his Gospel, came upon small charges to our doors: but now we must wet our feet to seek him. Our evil manners, and the bad fashions of a people at ease, from your youth, and like Moab, not casten from vessel to vessel, (Jer. xlviii. 11,) have made us, like standing waters, to gather a foul scum, and when we are jumbled our dregs come up, and are seen. Many take but half a grip[6] of Christ, and the wind bloweth them and Christ asunder. Indeed, when the mast is broken and blown into the sea, it is an art[7] then to swim upon Christ to dry land. It is even possible that the children of God, in a hard trial, lay themselves down as hidden in the lee side of a bush whill Christ their Master be taken, as Peter did; and lurk there, whill the storm be overpast. All of us know the way to a whole skin; and the singlest heart that is, hath a by-purse that will contain the denial of Christ, and a fearful backsliding. Oh, how rare a thing it is to be loyal and honest to Christ, when he hath a controversy with the shields of the earth! I wish all of you would consider, that this trial is from Christ, it is come upon you unbought; (indeed when we buy a temptation with our own money, no marvel that we be not easily free of it, and that God be not at our elbow to take it off our hand;) this is Christ's ordinary house-fire[8] that he maketh use of, to try all the vessels of his house withal. And Christ now is about to bring his treasure out before sun and moon, and to tell his money, and in the telling to try what weight of gold, and what weight of watered[9] copper is in his house. Do not now jouk,[10] or bow, or

[1] Assurance under one's hand. [2] Rent-free. [3] Tenure. [4] Title-deeds.
[5] Possess, enjoy. [6] Gripe, firm hold. [7] Requires skill.
[8] Fire that ordinarily burns in the house. [9] Plated with silver.
[10] *To jouk*, to incline the body forward with a quick motion, in order to avoid a stroke or an injury; hence, to shift, to yield up principle to escape present evil.

yield to your adversaries in a hair-breadth. Christ and his truth will not divide; and his truth hath not latitude and breadth, that ye may take some of it, and leave other some of it. Nay, the Gospel is like a small[1] hair, that hath no breadth, and will not cleave in two. It is not possible to twist and compound a matter betwixt Christ and Antichrist;[2] and, therefore, ye must either be for Christ, or ye must be against him. It was but man's wit, and the wit of prelates and their godfather, the Pope, (that man without law,) to put Christ and his prerogatives royal, and his truth, or the smallest nail-breadth of his latter-will, in the new Calendar of Indifferencies; and to make a blank of uninked paper in Christ's testament, that men may fill up; and to shuffle the truth, and matters which they call indifferent, through other;[3] and spin both together, that Antichrist's wares may sell the better. This is but the device and forged dream of men, whose consciences are made of stoutness, and have a throat, that a graven image, greater than the bounds of the Kirk door, would get free passage into. I am sure that when Christ shall bring us all out in our blacks and whites,[4] at that day, when he shall cry down time, and the world, and when the glory of it shall lie in white ashes, like a May-flower cut down, and which hath lost the blossom, there shall be few, yea none, that dare make any point which toucheth the worship and honor of our King and Lawgiver, to be indifferent. Oh, that this misled and blindfolded world would see that Christ doth not rise and fall, stand or lie, by men's apprehensions! What is Christ the lighter, that men do with him, by open proclamation, as men do with clipped and light money? They are now crying down Christ some grain-weights, and some pounds or shillings; and they will have him lie[5] for a penny or a pound, for one or for a hundred, according as the wind bloweth from the east or from the west; but the Lord hath weighed him, and balanced him already; "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him:" his worth and his weight stand still. It is our part to cry, "Up, up with Christ, and down, down with all created glory before him." Oh, that I could heighten him, and heighten his name, and heighten his throne! I know, and am persuaded, that Christ shall again be high and great in this poor, withered, and sun-burnt Kirk of Scotland; and that the sparks of our fire shall fly over sea, and round about, to warm you and other sister churches; and that this tabernacle of David's house, that is fallen, even the Son of David's waste places shall be built again. And I know the prison, crosses, persecutions, and trials of the two slain witnesses, that are now dead and buried, (Rev. xi.) and of the faithful professors that have a back-door and back-entry of escape; and that death and Hell, and the world, and tortures, shall all cleave and split in twain, and give us free

[1] Slender.
[2] That is, to twist it round them both so as to bind them together, or to compound them together so as to make them unite.
[3] Promiscuously.
[4] Evil and good deeds.
[5] Be reckoned, stand for.

passage and liberty to go through toll-free: and we shall bring all God's good metal out of the furnace again, and leave behind us but our dross and our scum: we may then beforehand proclaim Christ to be victorious. He is crowned King in Mount Zion: God did put the crown upon his head, (Psal. ii.,) and who dare take it off again? Out of question, he hath sore and grievous quarrels against his Church: and, therefore, he is called, (Isa. xxxi. 9,) "He whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem." But when he hath performed his work on Mount Zion, all Zion's haters shall be as the hungry and thirsty man, that dreameth he is eating and drinking, and behold when he awakeneth, he is faint, and his soul empty. And this advantage we have also, that he will not bring before sun and moon all the infirmities of his wife; it is the modesty of marriage-anger or husband-wrath, that our sweet Lord Jesus will not come with chiding to the streets, to let all the world hear what is betwixt him and us: his sweet glooms [1] stay under roof, and that because he is God.

Two special things ye are to mind: 1. Try and make [2] sure your profession: that ye carry not empty lamps. Alas! security, security is the bane and the wrack [3] of the most part of the world. Oh, how many professors go with a golden lustre, and are gold-like before men, (who are but witnesses to our white skin,) and yet are but bastard and base metal! Consider how fair before the wind some do ply with up-sails and white, even to the nick [4] of illumination, (Heb. vi. 4, 5,) "And tasting of the heavenly gift; and a share and part of the Holy Ghost; and the tasting of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come;" and yet this is but a false nick of renovation, and, in a short time, such are quickly broken upon the rocks, and never fetch the harbor, but are sanded [5] in the bottom of Hell. Oh, make your haven sure, and try how ye come by conversion; that it be not stolen goods, in a white and well-lustered profession! A white skin over old wounds maketh an under-coating conscience; [6] false under-water, [7] not seen, is dangerous, and that is a leck [8] and rift in the bottom of an enlightened conscience, often falling, and sinning against light. Woe, woe is me that the holy profession of Christ is made a stage garment by many, to bring home a vain fame; and Christ is made to serve men's ends; this is, as it were, to stop an oven with a king's robes.

Know—2. Except men martyr and slay the body of sin in sanctified self-denial, they shall never be Christ's martyrs, and faithful witnesses. Oh, if I could be master of that house-idol, myself, my own, mine, my own will, wit, credit, and ease, how blessed were I! Oh, but we have need to be redeemed from our-

[1] Frowns.

[2] Try to make sure. *And*, in the Scottish dialect, is often placed between a governing verb and its infinitive, instead of *to*, in English.

[3] Destruction.

[4] Mark, degree.

[5] Stranded.

[6] Festering under the coat or skin which has been brought over the wound by its having been too hastily healed.—(Jer. vi. 14.)

[7] Bilge-water.

[8] Leak.

selves, rather than from the Devil and the world! Learn to put out yourselves, and to put in Christ for yourselves; it would make a sweet bartering and niffering,[1] and give old for new, if I could shuffle out self, and substitute Christ my Lord, in place of myself; to say, "Not I, but Christ; not my will, but Christ's; not my case, not my lust, not my feckless[2] credit, but Christ, Christ." But, alas! in leaving ourselves, in setting Christ before our idol, self, we have yet a glaiked[3] back-look to our old idol. O wretched idol, myself! when shall I see thee wholly decourted,[4] and Christ wholly put in thy room? Oh, if[5] Christ, Christ had the full place and room of myself! that all my aims, purposes, thoughts, and desires would coast and land upon Christ, and not upon myself! and, howbeit we cannot attain to this denial of me and mine, that we can say, "I am not myself, myself is not myself, mine own is no longer mine own," yet our aiming at this in all we do shall be accepted; for, alas! I think I shall die, but minting[6] and aiming to be a Christian. Is it not our comfort, that Christ, the Mediator of the New Covenant, is come betwixt us and God in the business, so that green and young heirs, the like of sinners, have now a Tutor that is God?—And now, God be thanked, our salvation is bottomed on Christ; sure I am, the bottom shall never fall out of Heaven and happiness to us; I would give you over the bargain a thousand times, were it not that Christ's free grace hath taken our salvation in hand.

Pray, pray and contend with the Lord, for your Sister-church; for it would appear that the Lord is about to speer for[7] his scattered sheep, in the dark and cloudy day. Oh, that it would please our Lord to set up again David's old wasted and fallen tabernacle in Scotland, that we might see the glory of the Second Temple in this land. Oh, that my little heaven were wadset,[8] to redeem the honor of my Lord Jesus among the Jews and Gentiles. Let never dew lie upon my branches, and let my poor flower wither at the root, so that Christ were enthroned, and his glory advanced in all the world, and especially in these Three Kingdoms. But I know that he hath no need of me; what can I add to him? but oh, that he would cause his high and pure glory to run through such a foul channel as I am! and, howbeit he hath caused the blossom to fall off my one poor joy, that was on this side of Heaven, even my liberty to preach Christ to his people, yet I am dead to that now, so that he would hew and carve glory, glory for evermore, to my royal King, out of my silence and sufferings. Oh, that I had my fill of his love; but I know ill manners make an unco[9] and strange Bridegroom.

I entreat you earnestly for the aid of your prayers, for I forget not you; and I salute with my soul in Christ, the faithful pastors, and honorable and worthy professors in that land. Now the God of peace, that brought again our Lord Jesus from the dead, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the Everlasting

1 Exchanging. 2 Weak, worthless. 3 Giddy, foolish. 4 Discarded.
5 That. 6 Indicating, by signs, an intention to attempt. 7 Inquire after.
8 Alienated under a right of reversion. 9 Distant, reserved, cold.

Covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweetest Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, Feb. 4, 1638.

LETTER CCLXXXV.

TO ROBERT GORDON, OF KNOCKBREX.

My very dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you.—I thought to have answered your two letters on this occasion, though I cannot say all that I would. Your timous[1] word, "not to delight in the cross, but in him who sweeteneth it," came to me in due time. I find the consolations and off-fallings that follow the cross of Christ so sweet, that I almost forget myself. My desire and purpose is, when Christ's honeycombs drop, neither to refuse to receive and feed upon his comforts, nor yet to make joy my bastard-god, or my new-found heaven. But what shall I say? Christ very often, in his sweet comforts, cometh unsent for, and it were a sin to close the door upon him; it is not unlawful to love and delight in Christ's apples, when I am not dotingly wooing, nor eagerly begging kisses; but when they come clean from the timber, (like kindness itself, that cometh of its own accord,) then I cannot but laugh upon Him who laugheth upon me. If joy and comforts come single and alone, without Christ himself, I think I would send them back again the gate[2] they came, and not make them welcome; but, when the King's train cometh, and the King in the midst of the company, oh how I am overjoyed with floods of love! I fear not, that too great spaits[3] of love wash away the growing corn, and loose my plants at the roots. Christ doeth no skaith[4] where he cometh; but certainly, I would wish such spiritual wisdom, as to love the Bridegroom better than his gifts, his propines,[5] or drink-money. I would be further in upon Christ, than at his joys. They but stand in the outer side of Christ; I would wish to be in, as a seal upon his heart; in, where his love and mercy lodgeth beside his heart. My Well-beloved hath ravished me; but it is done with consent of both parties, and it is allowable enough. But, my dear brother, ere I part with this subject, I must tell you, that ye may lift up my King in praises with me, Christ hath been keeping something these fourteen years for me, that I have now gotten in my heavy days that I am in for his name's sake; even an opened coffer of perfumed comforts, and fresh joys, coming new, and green, and powerful, from the fairest, fairest face of Christ my Lord. Let the sour law, let crosses, let Hell be cried down: love, love hath shamed me from my old ways. Whether I have a race to run, or

[1] Seasonable. [2] Way. [3] Deluges. [4] Harm. [5] Presents.

some work to do, I see not; but I think Christ seemeth to leave Heaven (to say so,) and his court, and come down to laugh, and play, and sport with a daft bairn.[1]

I am not thus plain with many I write to; it is possible I be misconstructed,[2] and deemed to seek a name; but my Witness above knoweth that I seek to have a good name raised upon Christ. I observe it to be our folly, to seek little from Christ, because our four-hours[3] may not be our supper; nor our propines[4] sent by the Bridegroom our tocher-good;[5] nor our earnest our principal sum. But I trow that few of us know how much may be had of Christ for a four-hours,[3] and a propine,[4] and an earnest. We are like the young heir, who knoweth not the whole bounds of his own lordship. Certainly, it is more than my part to say, "O sweetest Lord Jesus, what, howbeit I were split and broken into five thousand shreds or bits of clay, so being that every shred had a heart to love thee, and every one as many tongues as there are in Heaven, to sing praises to thee, before men and angels for evermore!" Therefore, if my sufferings cry goodness, and praise, and honor upon Christ, my stipend is well paid. Each one knoweth not what a life Christ's love is. Scaur[6] not at suffering for Christ; for Christ hath a chair, and a cushion, and sweet peace for a sufferer: Christ's trencher from the first mess of the high table is for a sinful witness. Oh, then, brother, who but Christ! who but Christ! Hold your tongue of lovers, where he cometh out. O all flesh, O dust and ashes, O angels, O glorified spirits, O all the shields of the world, be silent before him, come hither, and behold our Bridegroom, stand still and wonder for evermore at him! Why cease we to love and wonder, to kiss and adore him? It is a hard matter, that days lie betwixt him and me, and hold us asunder. Oh, how long, how long! Oh, how many miles are there to my Bridegroom's dwelling-house! it is a pain to frist[7] Christ's love any longer. But, it may be, that a drunken man lose his feet, and miss a step. Ye write to me, "hall-binks[8] are slippery." I do not think my dawting[9] world will still last, and that feasts will be my ordinary food: I would have humility, patience, and faith to set down both my feet, when I come to the north side of the cold and thorny hill. It is ill my common[10] to be sweer[11] to go an errand for Christ, and to take the wind upon my face for him. Lord, let me never be a false witness, to deny that I saw Christ take the pen in his hand, and subscribe my writes.[12]

My dear brother, ye complain to me that ye cannot hold sight of me: but were I a footman, I would go at leisure; but sometimes the King taketh me into his coach, and draweth me; and then I outrun myself; but, alas, I am still a forlorn transgressor! Oh, how unthankful! I will not put you off your sense of dark-

1 Foolish child. 2 Misconstrued. 3 Slight afternoon repast.
4 Present. 5 Marriage-portion. 6 Boggle.
7 Postpone enjoyment of. 8 Seats in the hall, elevated places of dignity.
9 Fondling. 10 It ill becomes me. 11 Reluctant. 12 Charters.

ness; but let me say this, "Who gave you proctor-fee, to speak for the law, which can speak for itself, better than ye can do?" I would not have you to bring your dittay[1] in your own bosom with you to Christ.

Let the Old Man and the New Man be summoned before Christ's white throne, and let them be confronted before Christ, and let each of them speak for themselves. I hope, howbeit the New Man complain of his lying among pots, which maketh the believer look black, yet he can also say, "I am comely as the tents of Kedar." Ye shall not have my advice not to bemoan your deadness; but I find by some experience, which ye knew before I knew Christ, that it suiteth not a ransomed man of Christ's buying, to go and plea[2] for the sour law, our old forcasten[3] husband; for we are now not under the law, (as a covenant,) but under grace. Ye are in no man's common,[4] but Christ's! I know that he bemoaneth you more than you do yourself; I say this, because I am wearied of complaining. I thought it had been humility to imagine that Christ was angry with me, both because of my dumb Sabbaths, and my hard heart: but I feel now nothing but aching wounds: my grief, whether I will or not, swelleth upon me; but let us die in grace's hall-floor, pleading before Christ. I deny nothing that the Mediator will challenge[5] me of; but I turn it all back upon himself. Let him look his own old accounts, if he be angry, for he will get no more of me. When Christ saith, "I want repentance," I meet him with this, "True Lord; but thou art made a King and a Prince to give me repentance," (Acts v. 31.) When Christ bindeth a challenge[6] upon us, we must bind a promise back upon him. Be wo[7] and lay yourself in the dust before God, (which is suitable;) but withal let Christ take the payment in his own hand, and pay himself off the first end of his own merits, else he will come behind for anything that we can do. I am every way in your case, as hard-hearted and dead as any man; but yet I speak to Christ through my sleep. Let us then proclaim a free market for Christ, and swear ourselves bare,[8] and cry on him, to come without money and buy us, and take us home to our Ransom-payer's fire-side, and let us be Christ's free-boarders: because we dow[9] not pay the old, we may not refuse to take on Christ's new debt of mercy: let us do our best, Christ will still be behind[10] with us, and many terms will run together. For my part, let me stand for evermore in his book, as a forlorn dyvour.[11] I most desire to be thus far in his common[12] of new, as to kiss his feet: I know not how to win[13] to a heartsome[14] fill and feast of Christ's love; for I dow[15] neither buy, nor beg, nor borrow, and yet I cannot want it—I dow[15] not

1 Indictment. 2 Sue at law. 3 Abandoned.
4 Under obligation to no man. 5 Accuse. 6 Accusation.
7 Grieved. 8 Take the bankrupt's oath, that we are not worth anything.
9 Are not able to. 10 Not have received all his due.
11 A bankrupt. 12 Under obligation to him. 13 Attain.
14 Hearty. 15 Am not able to.

want it. Oh, if I could praise him! yea, I would rest content with a heart submissive and dying of love for him; and, howbeit I never win [1] personally in at Heaven's gates, oh, would to God! I could send in my praises to my incomparable Well-beloved, or cast my love-songs of that matchless Lord, Jesus, over the walls, that they might light in his lap, before men and angels!

Now, grace, grace be with you. Remember my love to your wife and daughter, and brother John.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Aberdeen, June 11, 1638.

LETTER CCLXXXVI.

TO THE PARISHIONERS OF KILMALCOLM.

Worthy, and well-beloved in Christ Jesus our Lord, —Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Your letters could not come to my hand in a greater throng of business than I am now pressed with at this time, when our Kirk requireth the public help of us all; yet I cannot but answer the heads of both your letters, with provision that ye choose, after this, a fitter time for writing. 1. I would not have you to pitch upon me, as the man able by letters to answer doubts of this kind, while there are in your bounds men of such great parts, most able for this work. I know that the best are unable; yet it pleaseth that Spirit of Jesus, to blow his sweet wind through a piece of dry stick, that the empty reed may keep no glory to itself; but a minister can make no such wind as this to blow, he is scarce able to lend it a passage to blow through him. 2. Know that the wind of this Spirit hath a time, when it bloweth sharp, and pierceth so strongly, that it would blow through an iron door; and this is commonly rather under suffering for Christ, than at any other time. Sick children get of Christ's pleasant things, to play them withal, because Jesus is most tender of the sufferer, for he was a sufferer himself. Oh, if [2] I had but the leavings and the drawing of the by-board [3] of a sufferer's table! But I leave this to answer yours.

I. Ye write, That God's vows are lying on you; and security, strong, and sib [4] to nature, stealing on you who are weak. I answer,—1. Till we be in Heaven, the best have heavy heads, as is evident, (Cant. v. 1; Psal. xxx. 6; Job xxix. 18; Matth. xxvi. 33.) Nature is a sluggard, and loveth not the labor of religion; therefore, rest should not be taken, till we know that the disease is over, and in the way of turning, and that it is like a fever past the cool: and the quietness and the calms of the faith of victory over corruption, should be entertained in the place of security; so that if I sleep, I should desire to sleep faith's sleep in Christ's bosom. 2. Know also, that none who sleep sound can seriously

[1] Get. [2] Oh, that. [3] Side-table. [4] Akin.

complain of sleepiness. Sorrow for a slumbering soul, is a token of some watchfulness of spirit; but this is soon turned into wantonness, as grace in us too often is abused; therefore, our waking must be watched over, else sleep will even grow out of watching; and there is as much need to watch over grace, as to watch over sin: full men will soon sleep, and sooner than hungry men. 3. For your weakness to keep off security, that like a thief stealeth upon you, I would say two things:—1. To want complaints of weakness, is for Heaven, and angels that never sinned, not for Christians in Christ's camp on earth. I think that our weakness maketh us the Church of the redeemed ones, and Christ's field that the Mediator should labor in. If there were no diseases on earth, there needeth no physicians on earth. If Christ had cried down weakness, he might have cried down his own calling; but weakness is our Mediator's world; sin is Christ's only, only fair and market. No man should rejoice at weakness and diseases; but I think that we may have a sort of gladness at boils and sores, because, without them, Christ's fingers, as a slain Lord, would never have touched our skin. I dare not thank myself, but I dare thank God's depth of wise providence, that I have an errand in me, while I live, for Christ to come and visit me, and bring with him his drugs and his balm. Oh, how sweet is it for a sinner to put his weakness into Christ's strengthening hand, and to father a sick soul upon such a physician, and to lay weakness before him, to weep upon him, and to plead and pray! Weakness can speak and cry, when we have not a tongue; (Ezek. xvi. 6,) "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live." The Kirk could not speak one word to Christ then: but blood and guiltiness out of measure spake, and drew out of Christ pity, and a word of life and love. 2. As for weakness, we have it, that we may employ Christ's strength because of our weakness. Weakness is to make us the strongest things; that is, when having no strength of our own, we are carried upon Christ's shoulders, and walk as it were upon his legs: if our sinful weakness swell up to the clouds, Christ's strength will swell up to the sun, and far above the Heaven of Heavens.

II. Ye tell me, there is need of counsel for strengthening of new beginners. I can say little to that, who am not well begun myself: but I know that honest beginnings are nourished by Him, even by lovely Jesus, who never yet put out a poor man's dim candle, that is wrestling betwixt light and darkness. I am sure, that if new beginners would urge themselves upon Christ, and press their souls upon him, and importune him for a draught of his sweet love, they could not come wrong to Christ. Come once in upon the right nick[1] and step of his lovely love, and I defy you to get free of him again. If any beginners fall off Christ again, and miss him, they never lighted upon Christ as Christ: it was but an idol, like Jesus, which they took for him.

[1] Notch, degree.

III. Whereas ye complain of a dead ministry in your bounds; ye are to remember that the Bible among you is the contract of marriage; and the manner of Christ's conveying his love to your heart is not so absolutely dependent upon even lively preaching, as that there is no conversion at all, no life of God, but that which is tied to a man's lips:—the daughters of Jerusalem have done often that which the watchmen could not do. Make Christ your Minister. He can woo a soul at a dyke-side[1] in the field: he needeth not us, howbeit the flock be obliged to seek him in the shepherds' tents. Hunger of Christ's making may thrive, even under stewards who mind not the feeding of the flock. Oh, blessed soul, that can leap over a man, and look above a pulpit up to Christ, who can preach home to the heart, howbeit we were all dead and rotten.

IV. So to complain of yourselves, as to justify God, is right; providing ye justify his Spirit in yourselves: for men seldom advocate against Satan's work and sin in themselves, but against God's work in themselves. Some of the people of God slander God's grace in their souls, as some wretches use to do, who complain and murmur of want. "I have nothing," say they; "all is gone, the ground yieldeth but weeds and windlestraws;[2] when as their fat harvest, and their money in bank maketh them liars. But for myself, alas! I think it is not my sin; I have scarce wit to sin this sin; but I advise you to speak good of Christ for his beauty and sweetness, and speak good of him for his grace to yourselves.

V. Light remaineth, ye say, but ye cannot attain to painfulness. See if this complaint be not booked in the New Testament; and the place, (Rom. vii. 18,) is like this: "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I know not." But every one hath not Paul's spirit in complaining; for often in us complaining is but an humble backbiting and traducing of Christ's new work in the soul. But for the matter of the complaint, I would say, that the light of glory is perfectly obeyed in loving, and praising, and rejoicing, and resting in a seen and known Lord: but that light is not hereaway[3] in any clay body; for while we are here, light is in the most part broader and longer than our narrow and feckless[4] obedience; but if there be light, with a fair train and a great back, I mean, armies of challenging[5] thoughts, and sorrow for coming short of performance in what we know and see ought to be performed, then that sorrow for not doing is accepted of our Lord for doing. Our honest sorrow and sincere aims, together with Christ's intercession, pleading that God would welcome that which we have, and forgive what we have not, must be our life, till we be over the bound-road,[6] and in the other country, where the Law will get a perfect soul.

VI. In Christ's absence, there is, as ye write, a willingness to use means, but heaviness after the use of them, because of the

[1] Wall-side. [2] Withered, worthless grass. [3] In this present state.
[4] Worthless. [5] Accusing. [6] Boundary-line.

formal and slight performance. In Christ's absence, I confess, the work lieth behind; but if ye mean absence of comfort, and absence of sense of his sweet presence, I think that absence is Christ's trying of us, not simply our sin against him; therefore, howbeit our obedience be not sugared and sweetened with joy, (which is the sweetmeat bairns would still be at,) yet the less sense, and the more willingness in obeying, the less formality in our obedience, howbeit we think not so; for I believe that many think obedience formal and lifeless, except the wind be fair in the west, and sails filled with joy and sense, till souls, like a ship fair before the wind, can spread no more sail: but I am not of their mind, who think so. But if ye mean, by absence of Christ, the withdrawing of his working grace, I see not how willingness to use means can be at all under such an absence: therefore, be humbled for heaviness in that obedience, and thankful for willingness; for the Bridegroom is busking[1] his spouse oftentimes, while she is half sleeping; and your Lord is working and helping more than ye see. Also, I recommend to you heaviness for formality, and for lifeless deadness in obedience. Be casten down, as much as ye will or can, for deadness; and challenge[2] that slow and dull carcase of sin, that will neither lead nor drive, in your spiritual obedience. Oh, how sweet to lovely Jesus are bills and grievances, given in against corruption and the body of sin! I would have Christ, in such a case, fashed,[3] (if I may speak so,) and deaved[4] with our cries, as ye see the Apostle doeth, (Rom. vii. 24,) "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Protestations against the law of sin in you, are law-grounds why sin can have no law against you. Seek to have your protestations discussed and judged, and then shall ye find Christ on your side of it.

VII. Ye hold, that Christ must either have hearty service, or no service at all. If ye mean that he will not half[5] a heart, or have feigned service, such as the hypocrites give him, I grant you that,—Christ must have honesty or nothing,—but if ye mean, he will have no service at all, where the heart draweth back in any measure, I would not that were true, for my part of Heaven, and all that I am worth in the world. If ye mind to walk to Heaven, without a cramp or a crook,[6] I fear that ye must go your lone.[7] He knoweth our dross and defects; and sweet Jesus pitieth us, when weakness and deadness in our obedience is our cross, and not our darling.

VIII. The Liar, as ye write, challengeth[8] the work as formal; yet ye bless your Cautioner[9] for the ground-work he hath laid, and dare not say but ye have assurance in some measure. To this I say;—1. It shall be no fault to save Satan's labor, and challenge[2] it yourselves, or at least examine and censure; but beware of Satan's ends in challenging,[10] for he mindeth to put Christ and

[1] Decking. [2] Accuse. [3] Annoyed, pestered.
[4] Deafened. [5] Halve. [6] Halt.
[7] By yourselves alone. [8] Accuses. [9] Surety. [10] Accusing.

you at odds. 2. Welcome home faith in Jesus, who washeth still, when we have defiled our souls, and made ourselves loathsome, and seek still the blood of atonement for faults little or meikle.[1] Know the gate[2] to the well, and lie about it. 3. Make meikle[3] of assurance, for it keepeth your anchor fixed.

IX. Out-breakings, ye say, discourage you, so that ye know not, if ever ye shall win[4] again to such overjoying consolations of the Spirit in this life, as formerly ye had; and, therefore, a question may be, If, after assurance and mortification, the children of God be ordinarily fed with sense and joy? I answer, I see no inconvenience to think it is enough, in a race, to see the gold at the starting-place, howbeit the runners never get a view of it, till they come to the rink's[5] end: and that our wise Lord thinketh it fittest that we should not always be fingering and playing with Christ's apples. Our Well-beloved, I know, will sport and play with his bride, as much as he thinketh will allure her to the rink's[5] end. Yet I judge it not unlawful to seek renewed consolations, providing—1. The heart be submissive, and content to leave the measure and timing of them to him. 2. Providing they be sought, to excite us to praise, and strengthen our assurance, and sharpen our desires after himself. 3. Let them be sought, not for our humors or swelling of nature, but as the earnest of Heaven; and I think many do attain to greater consolations after mortification, than ever they had formerly. But I know that our Lord walketh here still by a sovereign latitude, and keepeth not the same way, as to one hairbreadth, without a miss, toward all his children. As for the Lord's people with you, I am not the man fit to speak to them. I rejoice exceedingly, that Christ is engaging souls amongst you: but I know that in conversion all the winning is in the first buying, as we use to say; for many lay false and bastard foundations, and take up conversion at their foot, and get Christ for as good as half-nothing, and had never a sick night for sin; and this maketh loose work. I pray you to dig deep. Christ's palace-work, and his new dwelling, laid upon Hell felt and feared, is most firm: and Heaven, grounded and laid upon such a hell, is surest work, and will not wash away with winter storms. It were good that professors were not like young heirs, that come to their rich estate long ere they come to their wit; and so is seen on it; the tavern, and the cards, and the harlots steal their ridges[6] from them, ere ever they be aware what they are doing. I know that a Christ bought with strokes is sweetest. 4. I recommend to you conference and prayer at private meetings: for warrant whereof, see Isa. ii. 3; Jer. l. 4, 5; Hos. ii. 1, 2; Zech. viii. 20, 21, 22, 23; Mal. iii. 16; Luke xxiv. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17; John xx. 19; Acts xii. 12; Col. iii. 16—and iv. 6; Ephes. iv. 29; 1 Pet. iv. 10; 1 Thes. v. 14; Heb. iii. 13, and x. 25. Many coals make a good fire, and that is a part of the communion of saints.

I must entreat you, and your Christian acquaintances in the

[1] Great. [2] Road. [3] Much.
[4] Attain. [5] Race's. [6] Acres.

parish, to remember me to God in your prayers, and my flock and ministry, and my transportation [1] and removal from this place, which I fear at this Assembly; and be earnest with God for our Mother-kirk. For want of time, I have put you all in one letter. The rich grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Anwoth, Aug. 5, 1639.

LETTER CCLXXXVII.

TO THE VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I know that ye are near many comforters, and that the promised Comforter is near-hand [2] also; yet, because I found your Ladyship comfortable to myself, in my sad days, which are not yet over my head, it is my part, and more in many respects, (howbeit I can do little, God knoweth, in that kind,) to speak to you in your wilderness lot.

I know, dear and noble Lady, that this loss of your dear child [3] came upon you, one piece and part of it after another; and that ye were looking for it, and that now the Almighty hath brought on you that which ye feared; and that your Lord gave you lawful warning; and I hope that for His sake who brewed and masked [4] this cup in Heaven, ye will gladly drink, and salute and welcome the cross. I am sure, that it is not your Lord's mind to feed you with judgment and wormwood, and to give you waters of gall to drink, (Ezek. xxxiv. 16; Jer. ix. 15.) I know that your cup is sugared with mercy; and that the withering of the bloom, the flower, even the white and red of worldly joys, is for no other end, than to buy out at the ground the reversion of your heart and love. Madam, subscribe to the Almighty's will; put your hand to the pen, and let the cross of your Lord Jesus have your submissive and resolute AMEN. If ye ask and try whose this cross is? I dare say that it is not all your own, the best half of it is Christ's: then your cross is no born-bastard, but lawfully begotten, it sprang not out of the dust, (Job v. 6.) If Christ and ye be halvers of this suffering, and he say, "Half mine," what should ail you? And I am here right upon the style of the word of God, (Phil. iii. 10,) "The fellowship of Christ's sufferings," (Col. i. 24,) "The remnant of the afflictions of Christ," (Heb. xi. 26,) "The reproach of Christ." It were but to shift the comforts of God, to say, "Christ had never such a cross as mine; he had never a dead child, and so this is not his cross, neither can he in that meaning be the owner of this cross:" but I hope that Christ, when he married you, married you and all the crosses and wo [5] hearts that follow you: and the word maketh no exception. (Isa.

[1] Translation. [2] At hand.
[3] John, the second Viscount Kenmure, who died in 1639; Lady Kenmure's only son.
[4] Infused. [5] Grieved.

lxiii. 9.) "In all their afflictions he was afflicted." Then Christ bore the first stroke of this cross; it rebounded off him upon you, and ye get it at the second hand, and ye and he are halvers in it. And I shall believe, for my part, that he mindeth to distil heaven out of this loss, and all others the like; for wisdom devised it, and love laid it on, and Christ owneth it as his own, and putteth your shoulder only beneath a piece of it. Take it with joy as no bastard cross, but as a visitation of God well-born; and spend the rest of your appointed time, till your change come, in the work of believing; and let faith, that never yet made a lie to you, speak for God's part of it, "He will not, he doth not make you a sea or a whale-fish, that he keepeth you in ward," (Job vii. 12.) It may be, that ye think not many of the children of God in such a hard case as yourself; but what would ye think of some, who would exchange afflictions, and give you to the boot? but I know that yours must be your own alone, and Christ's together.

I confess it seemed strange to me, that your Lord should have done that which seemeth to ding[1] out the bottom of your comforts worldly; but we see not the ground of the Almighty's sovereignty; "he goeth by[2] on our right hand, and on our left hand, and we see him not." We see but pieces of the broken links of the chains of his providence, and he coggeth[3] the wheels of his own providence, that we see not. Oh, let the Former work his own clay into what frame he pleaseth! "Shall any teach the Almighty knowledge?" If he pursue dry stubble, who dare say, "What doest thou?" Do not wonder to see the Judge of the world weave into one web, your mercies and the judgments of the House of Kenmure. He can make one web of contraries.

But my weak advice, with reverence and correction, were for you, dear and worthy Lady, to see how far mortification goeth on, and what scum the Lord's fire casteth out of you. I know, that ye see your knottiness,[4] since our Lord whiteth[5] and heweth, and plaineth you; and the glancing of the furnace is to let you see what scum or refuse ye must want, and what froth is in nature, that must be boiled out, and taken off in the fire of your trials. I do not say, that heavier afflictions prophesy heavier guiltiness; A cross is often but a false prophet in this kind: but I am sure that our Lord would have the tin, and the bastard metal in you removed; lest the Lord say, "The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed in the fire, the Founder melteth in vain," (Jer. vi. 29.)

And I shall hope, that grief will not so far smother your light, as not to practise this so necessary a duty, to concur with him in this blessed design. I would gladly plead for the Comforter's part of it, not against you, madam, (for I am sure ye are not his party,[6]) but against your grief, which will have its own violent incursions in your soul: and I think it be not in your power to

1 Drive, knock.
2 Past.
3 *To cog a wheel*, to place a stone or piece of wood wedgewise between the ground and a wheel, to prevent it from moving.
4 Knarliness.
5 *To white*, to dress with a knife, to whittle.
6 Opposing party.

help it. But I must say, there are comforts allowed upon you; and, therefore, want them not. When ye have gotten a running-over soul with joy now, that joy will never be missed out of the Infinite Ocean of delight, which is not diminished by drinking at it, or drawing out of it. It is a Christian art to comfort yourself in the Lord; to say, "I was obliged to render back again this child to the Giver: and if I have had four years' loan of him, and Christ eternity's possession of him, the Lord hath kept condition with me: if my Lord would not have him and me to tryste[1] both in one hour at death's door-threshold together, it is his wisdom so to do, I am satisfied: my tryste[2] is suspended, not broken off, nor given up." Madam, I would that I could divide sorrow with you, for your ease; but I am but a beholder, it is easy to me to speak; the God of comfort speak to you, and allure with his feasts of love. My removal from my flock, is so heavy to me, that it maketh my life a burden to me; I had never such a longing for death. The Lord help and hold up sad clay.

I fear that ye sin in drawing Mr. William Dalgleish from this country, where the laborers are few, and the harvest great.

Madam, desire my Lord Argyll to see for provision to a pastor for this poor people. Grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

Kirkcudbright, Oct. 1, 1639.

LETTER CCLXXXVIII.

TO THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN IRELAND.

MUCH HONORED, REV., AND DEARLY BELOVED IN OUR LORD, —Grace, mercy, and peace be to you all.—I know that there are many in this nation more able than I to speak to the sufferers for, and witnesses of Jesus Christ; yet pardon me to speak a little to you who are called in question for the Gospel once committed to you.

I hope that ye are not ignorant, that as peace was left to you in Christ's testament, so the other half of the testament was a legacy of Christ's sufferings, (John xvi. 33.) "These things have I spoken, that in me ye might have peace; in the world ye shall have trouble." Because, then, ye are made assigns and heirs to a life-rent of Christ's cross, think that fiery trial no strange thing: for the Lord Jesus shall be no loser by purging the dross and tin out of his Church in Ireland:—his wine-press is but squeezing out the dregs, the scum, the froth, and refuse of that Church. I had once the proof of the sweet smell, and the honest and honorable peace, of that slandered thing the cross of our Lord Jesus: but though, alas! these golden days that then I had, be now in a great part gone; yet I dare say, that the issue and outgate[3] of your suf-

[1] Meet by appointment. [2] Appointment to meet. [3] Egress.

ferings shall be the advantage, the golden reign and dominion of the Gospel, and the high glory of the never-enough-praised Prince of the kings of the earth, and the changing of the brass of the Lord's temple among you into gold, and the iron into silver, and the wood into brass. Your officers shall yet be peace, and your exactors righteousness, (Isa. lx. 17, 18;) your old, fallen walls shall get a new name, and the gates of your Jerusalem shall get a new style; they shall call your walls Salvation, and your gates, Praise. I know that Deputy, prelates, Papists, temporizing lords, and proud mockers of our Lord, crucifiers of Christ for his coat, and all your enemies, have neither fingers nor instruments of war to pick out one stone out of your wall; for each stone of your wall is "Salvation." I dare give you my royal and princely Master's word for it, that Ireland shall be a fair bride to Jesus, and Christ will build on her a palace of silver, (Cant. viii. 9.) Therefore, weep not as if there were no hope; fear not, put on strength, put on your beautiful garments, (Isa. lii. 1;) your foundation shall be sapphires, your windows and gates precious stones, (Isa. liv. 11, 12.) Look over the water, and behold and see, who is on the dry-land waiting for your landing. Your deliverance is concluded, subscribed and sealed in Heaven. Your goods that are taken from you, for Christ and his truth's sake, are but arrested and laid in pawn, and not taken away. There is much laid up for you in His storehouse whose the earth and the fulness thereof is: your garments are spun, and your flocks are feeding in the fields, your bread is laid up for you, your drink is brewn,[1] your gold and silver is at the bank, and the interest goeth on and groweth: and yet I hear, that your task-masters do rob and spoil you, and fine you. Your prisons, my brethren, have two keys. The Deputy, prelates and officers keep but the iron keys of the prison, wherein they put you: but He that hath created the smith, hath other keys in Heaven; therefore, ye shall not die in the prison:—other men's ploughs are laboring for your bread, your enemies are gathering in your rents. He that is kissing his bride on this side of the sea in Scotland, is beating her beyond the sea in Ireland, and feeding her with the bread of adversity and the water of affliction; and yet he is the same Lord to both.

Alas! I fear that Scotland be undone, and slain with this great mercy of reformation, because there is not here that life of religion, answerable to the huge greatness of the work, that dazzleth our eyes. For the Lord is rejoicing over us in this land, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride: and the Lord hath changed the name of Scotland; they call us now no more "Forsaken," nor "Desolate," but our land is called "Hephzibah," and "Beulah," (Isa. lxii. 4,) for the Lord delighteth in us, and this land is married to himself. There is now an highway made through our Zion, and it is called the "Way of holiness;" the unclean shall not pass over it: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err in it: the wilderness doth rejoice and blossom as the rose; "The

[1] Brewed.

ransomed of the Lord are returned back unto Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads," (Isa. xxxv. 10:) the Canaanite is put out of our Lord's house; there is not a beast left to do hurt, (at least, professedly,) in all the Holy Mountain of the Lord. Our Lord is fallen[1] to wrestle with his enemies, and hath brought us out of Egypt; we have "the strength of an unicorn," (Num. xxiii. 22.) The Lord hath eaten up the sons of Babel; he hath broken their bones, and hath pierced them through with his arrows; we take them captives whose captives we were, and we rule over our oppressors, (Isa. xiv. 2.) It is not brick, nor clay, nor Babel's cursed timber and stones, that is in our second temple; but our princely King Jesus is building his house all palace-work and carved stones:—it is the habitation of the Lord.

We do welcome Ireland and England to our Well-beloved. We invite you, O Daughters of Jerusalem, to come down to our Lord's garden, and seek our Well-beloved with us; for his love will suffice both you and us. We do send you love-letters over the sea, to request you to come and to marry our King, and to take part of our bed; and we trust our Lord is fetching a blow upon the Beast, and the scarlet-colored Whore, to the end that he may bring in his ancient Widow-wife, our dear sister, the Church of the Jews. Oh, what a heavenly heaven were it to see them come in by this mean, and suck the breasts of their little sister, and renew their old love with their first Husband, Christ our Lord! They are booked in God's word, as a bride contracted upon Jesus! Oh, for a sight, in this flesh of mine, of the prophesied marriage between Christ and them! The kings of Tarshish, and of the Isles must bring presents to our Lord Jesus, (Psal. lxxii. 10.) And Britain is one of the chiefest isles; why then but we may believe, that our kings of this Island shall come in, and bring their glory to the New Jerusalem, wherein Christ shall dwell in the latter days? It is our part to pray, "That the kingdoms of the earth may become Christ's."

Now I exhort you in the Lord Jesus, not to be dismayed nor afraid for the two tails of these smoking firebrands, the fierce anger of the Deputy with civil power, and of the bastard prelates with the power of the Beast; for they shall be cut off. They may well eat you and drink you, but they shall be forced to vomit you out again alive. If two things were firmly believed, sufferings would have no weight. If the fellowship of Christ's sufferings were well known, who would not gladly take part with Jesus? For Christ and we are halvers and joint owners of one and the same cross: and, therefore, he that knew well what sufferings were, as he esteemed all things but loss for Christ, and did judge them but dung, so did he also judge of them, that he might know the fellowship of his sufferings, (Phil. iii. 10.) Oh, how sweet a sight is it, to see a cross betwixt Christ and us; to hear our Redeemer say, at every sigh, and every blow, and every loss of a believer, "Half mine!" So they are called, "The sufferings of

[1] Has betaken himself.

Christ," and, "The reproach of Christ," (Col. i. 24; Heb. xi. 26.) As when two are partners and owners of a ship, the half of the gain and half of the loss belong to each of the two; so Christ in our sufferings is half-gainer and half-loser with us; yea, the heaviest end of the black tree of the cross lieth on your Lord; it falleth first upon him, and it but reboundeth off him upon you; "The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me," (Psal. lxix. 9.) Your sufferings are your treasure, and are greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, (Heb. xi. 26.) And, if your cross come through Christ's fingers ere it come to you, it receiveth a fair lustre from him, it getteth a taste and relish of the King's spikenard, and of Heaven's perfume; and the half of the gain, when Christ's shipful of gold cometh home, shall be yours. It is an augmenting of your treasure to be rich in sufferings, "to be in labors abundant, in stripes above measure," (2 Cor. xi. 23;) and to have the sufferings of Christ abounding in you, (2 Cor. i. 5,) is a part of Heaven's stock. Your goods are not lost which they have plucked from you, for your Lord hath them in keeping; they are but arrested and seized upon, he shall loose the arrest. Ye shall be fed with the heritage of Jacob, your father; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, (Isa. lviii. 14.)

Till I shall be on the hall-floor of the highest palace, and get a draught of glory out of Christ's hand, above and beyond time, and beyond death, I shall never (it is like) see fairer days, than I saw under that blessed tree of my Lord's cross. His kisses then were king's kisses. Those kisses were sweet and soul-reviving; one of them, at the same time, was worth two and a half, (if I may speak so,) of Christ's week-days kisses. Oh, sweet, sweet for evermore, to see a rose of Heaven growing in as ill-ground as Hell; and to see Christ's love, his embracements, his dinners and suppers of joy, peace, faith, goodness, long-suffering, and patience, growing and springing, like the flowers of God's garden, out of such stony and cursed ground as the hatred of the prelates, and the malice of their High Commission, and the Antichrist's bloody hand and heart! Is not here art and wisdom? Is not here Heaven indented in Hell, (if I may say so,) like a jewel set with skill in a ring with the enamel of Christ's cross?—the ruby and riches of glory, that groweth up out of the cross, are beyond telling. Now the blackest and hottest wrath and most fiery and all-devouring indignation of the Judge of men and angels, shall come upon them who deny our sweet Lord Jesus, and put their hand to that oath of wickedness now pressed. The Lord's coal at their heart shall burn them up both root and branch. The estates of great men that have done so, if they do not repent, shall consume away, and the ravens shall dwell in their houses, and their glory shall be shame. Oh, for the Lord's sake! keep fast by Christ, and fear not man that shall die, and wither as the grass. The Deputy's bloom shall fall, and the prelates shall cast their flower, and the east wind of the Lord, of "the Lord strong and mighty," shall blast and break them; therefore, fear them not: they are

but idols, that can neither do evil nor good. Walk not in the way of those people that slander the footsteps of our royal and princely, anointed King Jesus, now riding upon his white horse in Scotland. Let Jehovah be your fear. That decree of Zion's deliverance, passed and sealed up before the throne, is now ripe and shall bring forth a child, even the ruin and fall of the black kingdom, and the Antichrist's throne, in these Kingdoms. The Lord hath begun, and he shall make an end. Who did ever hear the like of this! Before Scotland travailed, she brought forth; and before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child, (Isa. lxvi. 7, 8.)

And when all is done, suppose there were no sweetness in our Lord's cross, yet it is sweet for his sake, for that lovely One, Jesus Christ; whose crown and royal supremacy is the question this day in Great Britain, betwixt us and our adversaries—and who would not think Him worthy of the suffering for? What is burning quick? what is drinking of our own heart's-blood? and what is a draught of melted lead for his glory? Less than a draught of cold water to a thirsty man, if the right price and due value were put on that worthy, worthy Prince, Jesus. Oh, who can weigh him! Ten thousand thousand heavens would not be one scale, or the half of the scale of the balance to lay him in. Oh, black angels, in comparison of him! Oh, dim, and dark, and lightless sun, in regard of that fair Sun of righteousness! Oh, feckless[1] and worthless Heavens of heavens, when they stand beside my worthy, and lofty, and high and excellent Well-beloved! Oh, weak, and infirm clay-kings! Oh, soft, and feeble mountains of brass, and weak created strength, in regard of our mighty and strong Lord of armies! Oh, foolish wisdom of men and angels, when it is laid in the balance beside that spotless, substantial Wisdom of the Father! If Heaven and earth, and ten thousand heavens, even round about these heavens that now are, were all in one paradise, decked with all the roses, flowers, and trees that can come forth from the art of the Almighty himself; yet set but our one Flower, that groweth out of the root of Jesse, beside that orchard of pleasure, one look of him, one view, one taste, one smell of his Godhead, would infinitely exceed and go beyond the smell, color, beauty, and loveliness of that paradise. Oh, to be with child of his love! and to be suffocated, (if that could be,) with the smell of his sweetness, were a sweet fill and a lovely pain. Oh, worthy, worthy loveliness. Oh, less of the creatures, and more of Thee! Oh, open the passage of the Well of love and glory on us, dry pits and withered trees! Oh, that Jewel and Flower of Heaven! If our Beloved were not mistaken by us, and unknown to us, he would have no scarcity of wooers and suitors; he would make Heaven and earth both see, that they cannot quench his love, for his love is a sea:—Oh, to be a thousand fathoms deep in this sea of love! He, he himself, is more excellent than Heaven; for heaven, as it cometh into the souls and

[1] Unsubstantial, unsatisfactory.

spirits of the glorified, is but a creature; and he is something, and a great Something, more than a creature. Oh, what a life were it, to sit beside this Well of love, and drink and sing, and sing and drink; and then to have desires and soul-faculties stretched and extended out many thousand fathoms in length and breadth, to take in seas and rivers of love!

I earnestly desire to recommend this love to you, that this love may cause you to keep his commandments, and to keep clean fingers, and make clean feet, that ye may walk as the redeemed of the Lord. Woe, woe be to them that put on his name, and shame this love of Christ with a loose and profane life: their feet, tongue, and hands, and eyes, give a shameless lie to the holy Gospel, which they profess. I beseech you in the Lord, to keep Christ, and walk with him: let not his fairness be spotted and stained by godless living. Oh, who can find in their heart to sin against love? and such a love as the glorified in Heaven shall delight to dive into, and drink of forever:—for they are evermore drinking in love, and the cup is still at their head, and yet without loathing; for they still drink, and still desire to drink forever and ever. Is not this a long-lasting supper?

Now, if any of our country-people, professing Christ Jesus, have brought themselves under the stroke and wrath of the Almighty, by yielding to Antichrist in an hairbreadth, but especially by swearing and subscribing that blasphemous oath, (which is the Church of Ireland's black hour of temptation,) I would entreat them, by the mercies of God at their last summons, to repent and openly confess before the world, to the glory of the Lord, their denial of Christ: or, otherwise, if either man or woman will stand and abide by that oath, then, in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus, I let them see that they forfeit their part of Heaven, and let them look for no less than a back-burden of the pure, unmixed wrath of God, and the plague of apostates and deniers of our Lord Jesus.

Let not me, a stranger to you, who never saw your face in the flesh, be thought bold in writing to you: for the hope I have of a glorious church in that land, and the love of Christ constraineth me. I know that the worthy servants of Christ, who once labored among you, cease not to write to you also, and I shall desire to be excused that I do join with them.

Pray for your Sister-church in Scotland; and let me entreat you for the aid of your prayers for myself and flock and ministry, and my fear of a transportation[1] from this place of the Lord's vineyard. Now the very God of peace sanctify you throughout. Grace be with you all.

Your brother and companion,
In the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, S. R.

Anwoth, 1639.

[1] Translation of a minister.

LETTER CCLXXXIX.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND MUCH HONORED BROTHER, DR. ALEXANDER LEIGHTON, CHRIST'S PRISONER IN BONDS AT LONDON.

REVEREND, AND MUCH HONORED PRISONER OF HOPE, —Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—It was not my part whom our Lord hath enlarged, to forget you his prisoner.

When I consider how long your night hath been, I think Christ hath a mind to put you in free grace's debt so much the deeper, as your sufferings have been of so long continuance. But what if Christ mind you no joy but public joy with enlarged and triumphing Zion: I think, sir, that ye would love it best to share and divide your song of joy with Zion, and to have mystical Christ in Britain halfer[1] and copartner with your enlargement. I am sure, that your joy, bordering and neighboring with the joy of Christ's Bride, would be so much the sweeter that it were public. I thought if Christ had halved my mercies, and delivered his bride and not me, that his praises should have been double to what they are; but now two rich mercies conjoined in one have stolen from our Lord more than half-praises. Oh, that mercy should so beguile us, and steal away our counts and acknowledgments!

Worthy sir, I hope, that I need not exhort you to go on, in hoping for the salvation of God. There hath not been so much taken from your time of ease and created joys as eternity shall add to your heaven. Ye know when one day in Heaven hath paid you, yea, and overpaid your blood, bonds, sorrow, and sufferings, that it would trouble angels' understanding to lay[2] the count of that surplus of glory, which eternity can and will give you. Oh, but your sand-glass[3] of sufferings and losses cometh to little, when it shall be counted and compared with the glory that abideth you on the other side of the water! Ye have no leisure to rejoice and sing here, while time goeth about you, and where your psalms will be short: therefore, ye will think eternity, and the long day of Heaven that shall be measured with no other sun nor horologe than the long life of the Ancient of days, to measure your praises little enough for you. If your span-length of time be cloudy, ye cannot but think, that your Lord can no more take your blood and your bands without the income and recompense of free grace, than he would take the sufferings of Paul and his other dear servants, that were well paid home beyond counting, (Rom. viii. 18.) If the wisdom of Christ hath made you Antichrist's eyesore and his envy, ye are to thank God that such a piece of clay, as ye are, is made the field of glory to work upon: it was the Potter's aim that the clay should praise him, and I hope it satisfieth you that your clay is for his glory. Oh, who can suffer enough for such a Lord! and who can lay out in bank enough of pain, shame, losses,

[1] Halver. [2] State. [3] Hour-glass.

and tortures, to receive in again the free interest of eternal glory! (2 Cor. iv. 17.) Oh, how advantageous a bargaining is it with such a rich Lord! If your hand and pen had been at leisure to gain glory on paper, it had been but paper-glory: but the bearing of a public cross so long, for the now controverted privileges of the crown and sceptre of free King Jesus, the Prince of the kings of the earth, is glory booked in Heaven. Worthy and dear brother, if ye go to weigh Jesus his sweetness, excellency, glory, and beauty, and lay foregainst[1] him your ounces, or drachms of suffering for him, ye shall be straitened two ways:—1. It will be a pain to make the comparison, the disproportion being by no understanding imaginable: nay, if Heaven's arithmetic and angels were set to work, they should never number the degrees of difference. 2. It would straiten you to find a scale for the balance to lay that high and lofty One, that over-transcending Prince of excellency in. If your mind could fancy as many created heavens as time hath had minutes, trees have had leaves, and clouds have had rain-drops, since the first stone of the creation was laid, they should not make half a scale in which to bear and weigh boundless excellency. And, therefore, the King whose marks ye are bearing, and whose dying ye carry about with you in your body, is, out of all cry and consideration, beyond and above all our thoughts.

For myself, I am content to feed upon wondering sometimes, at the beholding but of the borders and skirts of the incomparable glory which is in that exalted Prince; and I think, ye could wish for more ears to give than ye have, since ye hope these ears ye now have given him shall be passages to take in the music of his glorious voice. I would fain both believe and pray for a new bride of Jews and Gentiles to our Lord Jesus, after the land of graven images shall be laid waste; and that our Lord Jesus is on horseback, hunting and pursuing the Beast; and that England and Ireland shall be well-sweeped chambers for Christ and his righteousness to dwell in; for he hath opened our graves in Scotland, and the two dead and buried Witnesses are risen again, and are prophesying. Oh, that Princes would glory and boast themselves in carrying the train of Christ's robe royal in their arms! Let me die within half an hour after I have seen the temple of the Son of God enlarged, and the cords of Jerusalem's tent lengthened, to take in a more numerous company for a bride to the Son of God. Oh, if[2] the corner or foundation-stone of that house, that new house, were laid above my grave!

Oh! who can add to Him who is that great ALL? If he would create suns and moons, new heavens, thousand and thousand degrees more perfect than these that now are; and again, make a new creation ten thousand thousand degrees in perfection beyond that new creation; and again, still for eternity multiply new heavens; they should never be a perfect resemblance of that infinite excellency, order, weight, measure, beauty, and sweetness

[1] Opposite to. [2] Oh, that.

that is in him. Oh, how little of him do we see! Oh, how shallow are our thoughts of him! Oh, if[1] I had pain for him and shame and losses for him, and more clay and spirits for him; and that I could go upon earth without love, desire, hope, because Christ hath taken away my love, desire, and hope to Heaven with him!

I know, worthy sir, your sufferings[2] for him are your glory; and, therefore, weary not; his salvation is near at hand, and shall not tarry.

Pray for me. His grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Nov. 22, 1639.

LETTER CCXC.

TO MR. HENRY STUART, HIS WIFE, AND TWO DAUGHTERS, ALL PRISONERS OF CHRIST AT DUBLIN.

"Fear none of those things, which ye shall suffer,"—etc.—Rev. ii. 10.

Truly honored, and dearly beloved,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Think it not strange, beloved in our Lord Jesus, that Satan can command keys of prisons, and bolts, and chains:—this is a piece of the Devil's princedom that he hath over the world. Interpret and understand our Lord well in this: be not jealous of his love, though he make devils and men his under-servants to scour the rust off your faith, and purge you from your dross. And let me charge you, O Prisoners of hope, to open your window, and to look out by faith, and behold Heaven's post, that speedy and swift salvation of God, that is coming to you. It is a broad river that faith will not look over: it is a mighty and a broad sea, that they of a lively hope cannot behold the furthest bank and other shore thereof. Look over the water; your anchor is fixed within the veil; the one end of the cable is about the prisoner of Christ, and the other is entered within the veil, whither the Forerunner is entered for you, (Heb. vi. 19, 20.) It can go straight through the flames of the fire of the wrath of men, devils, losses,

[1] Oh, that.

[2] The Rev. A. Leighton, D.D., a presbyterian, was, for writing "Zion's Plea against Prelacy," sentenced, in 1630, to imprisonment during life; to pay a fine of 10,000*l.*; to be publicly whipped and pilloried at Westminster; to have one of his ears cut off, one side of his nose slitted, and to be branded with a burning iron on one cheek with S. S., as a sower of sedition;—and, on another day, to be again publicly whipped and pilloried at Cheapside; to have his other ear cut off, his other nostril slitted up, and his other cheek branded with S. S. On Nov. 16th, Dr. Leighton underwent the one half of this fiendish sentence; and on that day week—the sores on his back, head, and face being yet unhealed—he was mercilessly whipped at Cheapside by the hangman, who had previously been purposely intoxicated; was exposed in the pillory for nearly two hours in a hard frost and a fall of snow; had his other ear cut off, his other nostril slitted up, and his other cheek branded; and, afterwards, being unable to walk, was carried to the Fleet Prison, in which he lay till liberated by the Long Parliament.

tortures, death, and not a thread of it be singed or burnt:—men and devils have no teeth to bite it in two. Hold fast till he come. Your cross is of the color of Heaven and Christ, and passmented [1] over with the faith and comforts of the Lord's faithful covenant with Scotland: and that die and color can abide fair weather, and neither be stained nor cast the color;—yea, it reflects a scad [2] like the cross of Christ, whose holy hands many a day lifted up to God, praying for sinners, were fettered and bound, as if those blessed hands had stolen, and shed innocent blood. When your lovely, lovely Jesus had no better than the thief's doom, it is no wonder that your process be lawless and turned upside down; for he was taken, fettered, buffeted, whipped, spitted upon, before he was convicted of any fault, or sentenced. Oh, such a pair of sufferers and witnesses, as high and royal Jesus, and a poor piece guilty clay marrowed [3] together under one yoke! Oh, how lovely is the cross with such a second!

I believe that your prison is enacted in God's court, not to keep you till your hope breathe out its life and last: your cross is under law to restore you again safe to your brethren and sisters in Christ. Take Heaven's and Christ's back-bond [4] for a fair back-door out of your suffering. The Saviour is on his journey with salvation and deliverance for Mount Zion; and the sword of the Lord is drunk with blood, and made fat with fatness; his sword is bathed in Heaven against Babylon, for it is "the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompense for the controversy of Zion:" and persuade yourselves the streams of the river of Babylon shall be pitched, and the dust of the land brimstone and burning pitch. (Isaiah xxxiv. 8, 9.) And if your deliverance be joined with the deliverance of Zion, it shall be two salvations to you.

It were good to be armed beforehand for death or bodily tortures for Christ; and to think what a crown of honor it is, that God hath given you pieces of living clay, to be tortured witnesses for saving truth; and that ye are so happy, as to have some pints of blood to give out for the crown of that royal Lord who hath caused you to avouch himself before men. If ye can lend fines of three thousand pounds sterling for Christ, let Heaven's register and Christ's count-book keep in reckoning your depursements [5] for him. It shall be engraven and printed in great letters upon Heaven's throne, what you are willing to give for him: Christ's papers of that kind cannot be lost, or fall by.[6]

Do not wonder to see clay boast [7] the great Potter, and to see blinded men threaten the Gospel with death and burial, and to raze out truth's name. But where will they make a grave for the Gospel, and the Lord's bride? Earth and Hell shall be but

1 Bedecked. *Passments* are stripes of lace sewed on clothes.
2 Gleam of reflected light. 3 Paired.
4 A bond given by one who has received a previous bond, engaging that the person who gave the previous bond shall not, in consequence of it, come to any loss or damage.
5 Disbursements. 6 Aside. 7 To threaten by look or words.

little bounds for their burial. Lay all the clay and rubbish of this inch of the whole earth above our Lord's spouse, yet it will not cover her, nor hold her down; she shall live and not die, she shall behold the salvation of God.

Let your faith frist [1] God a little, and not be afraid for a smoking firebrand. There is more smoke in Babylon's furnace than there is fire. Till doomsday shall come, they shall never see the kirk of Scotland and our Covenant burnt to ashes; or if it should be thrown into the fire, yet it cannot be so burnt or buried as not to have a resurrection. Angry clay's wind shall shake none of Christ's corn: he will gather in all his wheat into his barn. Only let your fellowship with Christ be renewed: ye are sibbler [2] to Christ now, when you are imprisoned for him, than before, for now the strokes laid on you do come in remembrance before our Lord, and he can own his own wounds:—a drink of Christ's love, which is better than wine, is the drink-silver which suffering for his majesty leaveth behind it. It is not your sins which they persecute in you, but God's grace, and loyalty to King Jesus. They see no treason in you to your prince the King of Britain, albeit they say so; but it is Heaven in you that earth is fighting against, and Christ is owning his own cause. Grace is a party that fire will not burn, nor water drown. When they have eaten and drunken you, their stomach shall be sick, and they shall spue you out alive. Oh, what glory is it, to be suffering abjects for the Lord's glory and royalty? Nay, though his servants had a body to burn forever for this Gospel, so being that the high glory of triumphing and exalted Jesus did rise out of these flames, and out of that burning body, oh, what a sweet fire! oh, what soul-refreshing torment would that be! What if the pickles [3] of dust and ashes of the burnt and dissolved body, were musicians to sing his praises, and the highness of that never-enough exalted Prince of ages? Oh, what love is it in him, that he will have such musicians as we are to tune that psalm of his everlasting praises in Heaven! Oh, what shining and burning flames of love are these, that Christ will divide his share of life, of Heaven and glory with you! (Luke xxii. 29; John xvii. 24; Rev. iii. 21.) A part of his throne, one draught of his wine—his wine of glory and life, that cometh from under the throne of God and of the Lamb—and one apple of the Tree of life, will do more than make up all the expenses and charges of clay lent out for Heaven. Oh! oh! but we have short, and narrow, and creeping thoughts of Jesus, and do but shape Christ in our conceptions, according to some created portraiture! O angels, lend in [4] your help to make love-books and songs of our fair, and white, and ruddy standard-bearer amongst ten thousand! O Heavens! O Heaven of heavens! O glorified tenants, and triumphing households with the Lamb, put in new psalms and love-sonnets of the excellency of our Bridegroom, and help us to set him on high! O indwellers of earth and Heaven, sea and air, and O all ye created beings, within the bosom of the utmost

[1] Grant delay in payment. [2] More nearly related. [3] Grains. [4] Lend.

circle of this great world, oh, come help to set on high the praises of our Lord! O fairness of creatures, blush before his uncreated beauty! O created strength, be amazed to stand before your strong Lord of hosts! O created love, think shame[1] of thyself before this unparalleled love of Heaven! O angel of wisdom, hide thyself before our Lord, whose understanding passeth finding out! O sun in thy shining beauty, for shame put on a web of darkness, and cover thyself before thy brightest Master and Maker! Oh, who can add glory, by doing or suffering, to the never-enough admired and praised Lover! Oh, we can but bring our drop to this sea, and our candle, dim and dark as it is, to this clear and lightsome Sun of Heaven and earth! Oh, but we have cause to drink ten deaths in one cup dry, to swim through ten seas to be at that land of praises, where we shall see that wonder of wonders, and enjoy this Jewel of Heaven's jewels! O death, do thy utmost against us! O torments, O malice of men and devils, waste your strength on the witnesses of our Lord's testament! O devils, bring Hell to help you, in tormenting the followers of the Lamb! We will defy you to make us too soon happy, and to waft us too soon over the water, to the land where the noble Plant, the Plant of renown, groweth. O cruel time, that tormenteth us, and suspendeth our dearest enjoyments that we wait for, when we shall be bathed and steeped, soul and body, down in the depths of this Love of loves! O time, I say, run fast! O motions, mend your pace! O Well-beloved, be like a young roe on the Mountains of Separation! Post, post, and hasten our desired and hungered-for meeting—love is sick to hear tell of to-morrow.

And what then can come wrong to you, O honorable witnesses of his kingly truth? Men have no more of you to work upon, than some inches and span-lengths of sick, coughing, and phlegmatic clay. Your spirits are above their benches, courts, or high commissions. Your souls, your love to Christ, your faith cannot be summoned, nor sentenced, nor accused, nor condemned by pope, deputy, prelate, ruler, or tyrant. Your faith is a free lord, and cannot be a captive. All the malice of Hell and earth can but hurt the scabbard of a believer; and death at the worst can get but a clay pawn in keeping till your Lord make the King's keys, and open your graves. Therefore, upon luck's head, as we use to say, take your fill of his love, and let a post-way or causeway be laid betwixt your prison and Heaven, and go up and visit your treasure. Enjoy your Beloved, and dwell upon his love, till eternity come in time's room, and possess you of your eternal happiness. Keep your love to Christ, lay up your faith in Heaven's keeping, and follow the Chief of the House of the Martyrs that witnessed a fair confession before Pontius Pilate:—your cause and his is all one. The opposers of his cause are like drunken judges and transported, who in their cups would make acts and laws in their drunken courts, that the sun should not rise and shine on the earth; and send their officers and pursuivants to charge the

[1] Be ashamed.

sun and moon to give no more light to the world; and would enact in their court-books, that the sea, after once ebbing, should never flow again:—but would not the sun, moon, and sea break these acts, and keep their Creator's directions? The Devil, the great Fool, and Father of these under-fools, is older and more malicious than wise, that setteth the spirits in earth on work to contend and clash with Heaven's wisdom, and to give mandates and law-summons to our Sun, to our great Star of Heaven, Jesus, not to shine in the beauty of his Gospel, to the chosen and bought ones. O thou fair and fairest Sun of righteousness, arise and shine in thy strength, whether earth or Hell will or not. O victorious, O royal, O stout, princely Soul-conqueror, ride prosperously upon truth; stretch out thy sceptre as far as the sun shineth, and the moon waxeth and waneth. Put on thy glittering crown, O thou Maker of kings, and make but one stride, or one step of the whole earth, and travel in the greatness of thy strength, (Isaiah lxiii. 1, 2.) And let thy apparel be red, and all dyed with the blood of thy enemies:—thou art fallen righteous Heir by line to the kingdoms of the world.

Laugh ye at the giddy-headed clay-pots, and stout, brain-sick worms, that dare say, in good earnest, "This man shall not reign over us;" as though they were casting the dice for Christ's crown, which of them should have it. I know that ye believe the coming of Christ's Kingdom; and that there is a hole out of your prison, through which ye see daylight. Let not faith be dazzled with the temptations from a dying deputy, and from a sick prelate; believe under a cloud, and wait for him when there is no moon-light nor star-light. Let faith live and breathe, and lay hold on the sure salvation of God, when clouds and darkness are about you, and appearance of rotting in the prison before you. Take heed of unbelieving hearts, which can father lies upon Christ. Beware of "Doth his promise fail for evermore?" (Ps. lxxvii. 8.) For it was a man, and not God, that said it, who dreamed that a promise of God could fail, fall a-swoon,[1] or die. We can make God sick, or his promises weak, when we are pleased to seek a plea[2] with Christ. O sweet, O stout word of faith, (Job xiii. 15,) "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" O sweet epitaph, written upon the grave-stone of a dying believer, namely—"I died hoping, and my dust and ashes believe in life!" Faith's eyes, that can see through a mill-stone, can see through a gloom[3] of God, and under it read God's thoughts of love and peace. Hold fast Christ in the dark; surely ye shall see the salvation of God. Your adversaries are ripe and dry for the fire; yet a little while, and they shall go up in a flame; the breath of the Lord, like a river of brimstone, shall kindle about them.

What I write to one I write to ye all, that are sound-hearted in that kingdom, whom, in the bowels of Christ, I would exhort not to touch that oath. Albeit the adversaries put a fair meaning on it, yet the swearer must swear according to the professed intent

[1] Into a swoon. [2] Quarrel. [3] Frown.

and godless practice of the oath-makers, which is known to the world; otherwise I might swear that the creed is false, according to this private meaning and sense put upon it. Oh, let them not be beguiled to wash perjury, and the denial of Christ and the Gospel with ink-water:—some foul and rotten distinctions. Wash, and wash again and again the Devil and the lie, it will be long ere their skin be white.

I profess, it should beseem men of great parts rather than me to write to you: but I love your Cause, and desire to be excused; and must entreat for the help of your prayers, in this my weighty charge here for the University and pulpit, and that ye would entreat your acquaintance also to help me. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Your brother and companion,
In the patience and Kingdom of Jesus Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, 1640.

LETTER CCXCI.

TO MRS. PONT, PRISONER AT DUBLIN.

Worthy and dear Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—The cause which ye suffer for, and your willingness to suffer, is ground enough of acquaintance for me to write to you; although I do confess myself unable to speak for the encouragement of a prisoner of Christ.

I know that ye have advantage beyond us who are not under sufferings; for your sighing, (Ps. cii. 20,) is a written bill for the ears of your Head, the Lord Jesus; and your breathing, (Lam. iii. 56;) and your looking up, (Ps. v. 3, and lxix. 3.) And, therefore, your meaning, half-spoken, half-unspoken, will seek no jailer's leave, but will go to Heaven without leave of prelate or deputy, and be heartily welcome; so that ye may sigh and groan out your mind to Him who hath all the keys of the King's Three Kingdoms and dominions. I dare believe that your hope shall not die. Your trouble is a part of Zion's burning, and ye know who guideth Zion's furnace, and who loveth the ashes of his burnt bride, because his servants love them, (Ps. cii. 14.) I believe that your ashes, if ye were burnt for this cause, shall praise him: for the wrath of men and their malice shall make a psalm to praise the Lord, (Ps. lxxvi. 10.) And, therefore, stand still, and behold, and see what the Lord is to do for this island; his work is perfect, (Deut. xxxii. 4.) The nations have not seen the last end of his work; his end is more fair and more glorious than the beginning.

Ye have more honor than ye can be able to guide well, in that your bonds are made heavy for such an honorable cause. The seals of a controlled Gospel, and the seals by bonds, and blood, and sufferings, are not committed to every ordinary professor. Some that would back Christ honestly in summer-time, would but

spill[1] the beauty of the Gospel, if they were put to suffering. And, therefore, let us believe, that Wisdom dispenseth to every one here, as He thinketh good who beareth them up that bear the cross: and since our Lord hath put you to that part, which was the flower of his own sufferings, we all expect that, as ye have in the strength of our Captain begun, so ye will go on without fainting. Providence maketh use of men and devils for the refining of all the vessels of God's house, small and great; and for doing of two great works at once in you, both for smoothing a stone to make it take band with Christ in Jerusalem's wall; and for witnessing to the glory of this reproached and borne-down Gospel, which cannot die, though Hell were made a grave about it. It shall be timous[3] joy for you to divide joy betwixt you and Christ's laughing bride in these Three Kingdoms:—and what if your mourning continue till mystical Christ in Ireland and in Great Britain and ye laugh both together? Your laughing and joy were the more blessed, that one sun should shine upon Christ, the Gospel, and you, laughing altogether in these Three Kingdoms. Your time is measured, and your days and hours of suffering from eternity were, by infinite Wisdom, considered. If Heaven recompense not to your own mind inches of sorrow, then I must say, that infinite Mercy cannot get you pleased; but if the first kiss of the white and ruddy cheek of the Standard-bearer and Chief among ten thousand, (Cant. v. 10,) shall overpay your prison at Dublin, in Ireland, then ye shall have no counts unanswered to give in to Christ. If your faith cannot see a nearer term-day, yet let me charge your hope to give Christ a new day, till eternity and time meet in one point. A paid sum, if ever paid, is paid, if no day be broken to the hungry creditor: take Heaven's bond and subscribed obligation for the sum, (John xiv. 3.) If hope can trust Christ, I know that he can, and will pay: but when all is done and suffered by you, ten hundred deaths for lovely, lovely Jesus is but eternity's half-penny;—figures and cyphers cannot lay[4] the proportion. Oh, but the surplus of Christ's glory is broad and large! Christ's items of eternal glory are hard and cumbersome to tell; and if ye borrow by faith and hope ten days, or ten hundred years from that eternity of glory that abideth you, ye are paid and more, in your hand. Therefore, O Prisoner of hope, wait on; posting, hasting salvation sleepeth not. Antichrist is bleeding, and in the way to death; and he biteth the sorest, when he bleedeth the fastest. Keep your intelligence betwixt you and Heaven, and your court with Christ; he hath in Heaven the keys of your prison, and can set you at liberty when he pleaseth. His rich grace support you. I pray you to help me with your prayers. Grace be with you.

Your brother,

In the patience and Kingdom of Jesus Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, 1640.

[1] Mar. [2] Unite, as mortar with a stone. [3] Seasonable. [4] State.

LETTER CCXCII.

TO MR. JAMES WILSON.

Dear Brother,—Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied upon you.—I bless our rich and only wise Lord who careth so for his new creation, that he is going over it again, and trying every piece in you, and blowing away the motes of his new work in you. Alas! I am not so fit a physician as your disease requireth. Sweet, sweet, lovely Jesus be your physician, where his under-chirurgeons cannot do anything for putting in order the wheels, paces, and goings of a marred soul. I have little time; but yet the Lord hath made me so to concern myself in your condition, that I dow not, I dare not, be altogether silent.

First, Ye doubt, from 2 Cor. xiii. 5, whether ye be in Christ or not? and so, whether ye are a reprobate or not? I answer three things to the doubt:—1. Ye owe charity to all men, but most of all to lovely and loving Jesus, and some also to yourself, especially to your renewed self; because your new self is not yours, but another Lord's, even the work of his own Spirit; therefore, to slander his work is to wrong himself. Love thinketh no evil; if ye love grace, think not ill of grace in yourself; and ye think ill of grace in yourself when ye make it but a bastard and a work of nature; for a holy fear that ye be not Christ's, and withal a care and a desire to be his, and not your own, is not, nay, cannot be, bastard nature. The great Advocate pleadeth hard for you; be upon the Advocate's side, O poor feared client of Christ! Stay, and side with such a Lover, who pleadeth for no other man's goods than his own; (for he, if I may say so, scorneth to be enriched with unjust conquest;[1]) and yet he pleadeth for you, whereof your letter, though too, too full of jealousy,[2] is a proof. For, if ye were not his, your thoughts, which, I hope, are but the suggestions of his Spirit, (that only bringeth the matter into debate, to make it sure to you,) would not be such, nor so serious as these, "Am I his?" or "Whose am I?" 2. Dare ye forswear your Owner, and say in cold blood, "I am not his?" What nature or corruption saith at starts, in you, I regard not. Your thoughts of yourself, when sin and guiltiness round you in the ear, and when you have a sight of your deservings, are Apocrypha, and not Scripture, I hope. Hear what the Lord saith of you, "He will speak peace." If your Master say, "I quit you," I shall then bid you eat ashes for bread, and drink waters of gall and wormwood. But, however Christ out of his own mouth should seem to say, "I come not for thee," as he did, Matt. xv. 24; yet let me say, that the words of tempting Jesus are not to be stretched as Scripture, beyond his intention, seeing his intention in speaking them is to strengthen, not to deceive; and, therefore,

[1] Acquisition. [2] Suspicion.

here faith may contradict what Christ seemeth at first to say, and so may ye. I charge you, by the mercies of God, be not that[1] cruel to grace and the new birth as to cast water on your own coal by misbelief. If ye must die, (as I know ye shall not,) it were a folly to slay yourself. 3. I hope that ye love the new birth and a claim to Christ, howbeit ye do not make it good; and if ye were in Hell, and saw the heavenly face of lovely, ten thousand times lovely Jesus, that hath God's hue, and God's fair, fair and comely red and white, wherewith it is beautified beyond comparison and imagination, ye could not forbear to say, "Oh, if[2] I could but blow a kiss from my sinful mouth from Hell up to Heaven, upon his cheeks that are a bed of spices, as sweet flowers!" (Cant. v. 13.) I hope ye dare say, "O fairest Sight of Heaven! O boundless Mass of crucified and slain love for me, give me leave to wish to love thee! O Flower and Bloom of Heaven and earth's love! O angels' Wonder! O thou, the Father's eternal, sealed Love! and O thou, God's old Delight! give me leave to stand beside thy love, and look in, and wonder; and give me leave to wish to love thee, if I can do no more." 4. We being born in atheism, and bairns of the house that we are come of, it is no new thing, my dear brother, for us to be under jealousies[3] and mistakes about the love of God. What think ye of this, that the Man, Christ, was tempted to believe there were but two persons in the blessed Godhead, and that the Son of God, the substantial and co-eternal Son, was not the lawful Son of God? Did not Satan say, "If thou be the Son of God?"

Secondly, Ye say, that ye know not what to do. Your Head said once that same word, or not far from it. (John xii. 27,) "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" And faith answered Christ's "What shall I say?" with these words, "O tempted Saviour, askest thou, 'What shall I say?' Say, 'Pray, Father, save me from this hour.'" What course can ye take but pray and frist[4] Christ his own comforts? He is no dyvour; take his word. "Oh," say ye, "I cannot pray." Answer—Honest sighing is faith breathing and whispering him in the ear: the life is not out of faith, where there is sighing, looking up with the eyes, and breathing toward God; (Lam. iii. 56,) "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." "But what shall I do in spiritual exercises?" ye say. Answer—1. If ye knew particularly what to do, it were not a spiritual exercise. 2. In my weak judgment, ye should first say, "I would glorify God in believing David's salvation, and the bride's marriage with the Lamb, and love the Church's slain Husband, although I cannot for the present believe mine own salvation." 3. Say, "I will not pass from my claim; suppose Christ should pass from his claim to me, it shall not go back upon my side: howbeit my love to him be not worth a drink of water, yet Christ shall have it, such as it is." 4. Say, "I shall rather spill[5] twenty prayers than not pray at all. Let my broken words go up

[1] So. [2] Oh, that. [3] Suspicions.
[4] *To frist*, to grant delay in payment. [5] Mar.

to Heaven; when they come up into the Great Angel's golden censer, that compassionate Advocate will put together my broken prayers, and perfume them." Words are but accidents of prayer.

"Oh," say ye, "I am slain with hardness of heart, and troubled with confused and melancholious[1] thoughts." Answer—My dear brother, what would ye conclude thence?—that ye knew not well who aughteth[2] you? I grant: "Oh, my heart is hard! oh, my thoughts of faithless sorrow! *Ergo*, I know not who aughteth[2] me" were good logic in Heaven amongst angels and the glorified; but down in Christ's hospital, where sick and distempered souls are under cure, it is not worth a straw. Give Christ time to end his work in your heart. Hold on in feeling and bewailing your hardness; for that is softness to feel hardness. 2. I charge you to make psalms of Christ's praises for his begun work of grace. Make Christ your music and your song; for complaining and feeling of want doth often swallow up your praises. What think ye of those who go to Hell never troubled with such thoughts? If your exercises be the way to Hell, God help me! I have a cold coal to blow at, and a blank paper for Heaven. I give you Christ caution[3] and my Heaven surety for your salvation. Lend Christ your melancholy, for Satan hath no right to make a chamber in your melancholy. Borrow joy and comforts from the Comforter. Bid the Spirit do his office in you; and remember that faith is one thing, and the feeling and notice of faith another. God forbid that feeling were *proprium quarto modo* to all the saints: and that this were good reasoning, "No feeling, no grace." I am sure, ye were not always, these twenty years by-past, actually knowing that ye live; yet all this time ye are living: so it is with the life of faith.

But, alas! dear brother, it is easy for me to speak words and syllables of peace; but Isaiah (lvii. 19,) telleth you, "I create peace." There is but one Creator ye know. Oh, that ye may get a letter of peace sent you from Heaven!

Pray for me, and for grace to be faithful, and for gifts to be able, with tongue and pen, to glorify God. I forget you not.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Jan. 8, 1640.

LETTER CCXCIII.

TO MY LADY BOYD.

MADAM,—I received your Ladyship's letter; but because I was still going through the country for the affairs of the Church, I have had no time to answer it.

I had never more cause to fear than I have now, when my Lord hath restored me to my second created Heaven on earth, and hath

[1] Melancholy. [2] *To aught*, to possess, to own. [3] Security.

turned my apprehended fears into joys, and great deliverance to his Church—whereof I have my share and part. Alas, that weeping prayers, answered, and sent back from Heaven with joy, should not have laughing praises! Oh, that this land would repent and lay burdens of praises upon the top of the fair Mount Zion! Madam, except this land be humbled, a reformation is rather my wonder than belief at this time. But surely it must be a wonder, and what is done already is a wonder. Our Lord must restore beauty to his churches without hire; for we were sold without money, and now our buyers repent them of the bargain, and would gladly give again better-cheap than they bought us. They devoured Jacob, and ate up his people as bread; now Jacob is growing a living child in their womb, and they would fain be delivered of the child, and render the birth:—our Lord shall be Midwife. Oh, that this land be not like Ephraim, "an unwise son, that stayeth too long in the place of the breaking forth of children!"

Your Ladyship is blessed with children, who are honored to build up Christ's waste places again. I believe that your Ladyship will think them well bestowed on that work, and that Zion's beauty is your joy. This is a mark and evidence from Heaven, which helpeth weak ones to hold their grip,[1] when other marks fail them.

I hope that your Ladyship is at a good understanding with Christ; and that, as becometh a Christian, ye take him up aright, (for many mistake and misshape Christ,) in his comings and goings. Your wants and falls proclaim, that ye have nothing of your own but what ye borrow;—nay, yourself is not your own,—but Christ hath given himself to you. Put Christ to the bank, and Heaven shall be your interest and income. Love him, for ye cannot over-love him. Take up your house in Christ, let him dwell in you, and abide in him; and then ye may look out of Christ, and laugh at the clay-heavens, that the sons of men are seeking after on this side of the water. Christ mindeth to make your losses grace's great advantage. Christ will lose nothing of you; nay, not even your sins, for he hath a use for them, as well as for your service; howbeit ye are to loathe yourself for them. I hope that ye fetch all the heaven ye have here in this life from that which is up above; and that your anchor is casten as high and deep as Christ; oh, but it is far and many a mile to the bottom of his love! If I had known long since, as I do now, (though still alas! I am ignorant,) what was in Christ, I would not have been so late in starting to the gate[2] to seek him.

Oh, what can I do or say to Him who hath made the north render me back again! A grave is no sure prison to him for the keeping of dry bones. Woe is me, that my foolish sorrow and unbelief, being on horseback, did ride so proudly and witlessly over my Lord's providence:—but when my faith was asleep, Christ was awake; and now, when I am awake, I say, he did all things

[1] Gripe. [2] Commencing with an alacrity.

well. Oh, infinite wisdom! Oh, incomparable loving-kindness! Alas, that the heart I have, is so little and worthless for such a Lord as Christ is! Oh, what odds find the saints in hard trials, when they feel sap at their roots, betwixt them and sun-burned, withered professors!—crosses and storms cause them to cast their blooms and leaves. Poor worldlings, what will ye do, when the span-length of your forenoon's laughter is ended, and when the weeping side of providence is turned to you?

I put all the favors which ye have bestowed on my brother upon Christ's score, in whose books are many such counts, and who will requite them. I wish you to be builded more and more upon the Stone laid in Zion, and then, ye shall be the more fit to have a hand in rebuilding our Lord's fallen Tabernacle in this land, in which ye shall find great peace when ye come to grips[1] with death, the King of terrors.

The God of peace be with your Ladyship; aud keep you blameless till the day of our Lord Jesus.

Your Ladyship's,

At all obedience in his sweet Lord and Master, S. B.

St. Andrew's.

LETTER CCXCIV.

TO HIS VERY DEAR FRIEND, JOHN FENWICK.

MUCH HONORED, AND DEAR FRIEND,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—The necessary impediments of my calling have hitherto kept me from making a return to your letter, the heads whereof I shall now briefly answer:—

As, I. I approve of your going to the Fountain, when your own cistern is dry. A difference there must be betwixt Christ's well and your borrowed water; and why but ye have need of emptiness and drying up as well as ye have need of the well? Want, and a hole there must be in our vessel, to leave room to Christ's art. His well hath its own need of thirsty drinkers, to commend infinite love which from eternity did brew such a cellar of living waters for us.

II. Ye commend his free love; and it is well done! Oh if[2] I could help you, and if I could be master-convener, to gather an earth-full an heaven-full of tongues, dipped and steeped in my Lord's well of love, or his wine of love, even tongues drunken with his love, to raise a song of praises to him, betwixt the east and west end, and furthest points of the broad heavens! If I were in your case, (as, alas! my dry and dead heart is not now in that garden,) I would borrow leave to come and stand upon the banks and coasts of that sea of love, and be a feasted soul, to see love's fair tide, free love's high and lofty waves, each of them

[1] Close struggling. [2] Oh, that.

higher than ten earths, flowing in upon pieces of lost clay. Oh, welcome, welcome, great sea! Oh, if[1] I had as much love for wideness and breadth, as twenty outmost shells and spheres of the Heaven of heavens, that I might receive in a little flood of his free love! Come, come, dear friend, and be pained, that the King's wine-cellar of free love, and his banqueting-house—oh, so wide, so stately! oh, so God-like, so glory-like!—should be so abundant, so overflowing, and your shallow vessel so little, to take in some part of that love. But since it cannot come into you, for want of room, enter yourself into this sea of love, and breathe under these waters, and die of love, and live as one dead and drowned of this love.

III. But why do ye complain of waters going over your soul, and that the smoke of the terrors of a wrathful Lord doth almost suffocate you, and bring you to death's brink? I know that the fault is in your eyes, not in him. It is not the rock that fleeth and moveth, but the green sailor. If your sense and apprehension be made judge of his love, there is a graven image made presently, even a changed god, and a foe god, who was once—"when ye washed your steps with butter, and the rock poured you out rivers of oil," (Job xxix. 6,)—a Friend God. Either now or never, let God work. Ye had never, since ye were a man, such a fair field for faith; for a painted hell and an apprehension of wrath in your Father, is faith's opportunity to try what strength is in it. Now, give God as large a measure of charity as ye have of sorrow. Now, see faith to be faith indeed, if ye can make your grave betwixt Christ's feet and say, "Though he should slay me, I will trust in him; his believed love shall be my winding-sheet, and all my grave-clothes; I shall roll and sew in my soul, my slain soul, in that web, his sweet and free love; and let him write upon my grave, 'Here lieth a believing dead man, breathing out and making a hole in death's broad-side, and the breath of faith cometh forth through the hole.'" See now if ye can overcome and prevail with God, and wrestle God's tempting to death quite out of breath, as that renowned wrestler did, (Hos. xii. 3,) "And by his strength he had power with God;" (ver. 4.) "yea, he had power over the Angel, and prevailed." He is a strong man, indeed, who overmatcheth Heaven's Strength, and the Holy One of Israel, the Strong Lord: which is done by a secret supply of divine strength within, wherewith the weakest, being strengthened, overcome and conquer. It shall be great victory, to blow out the flame of that furnace ye are now in, with the breath of faith: and when Hell, men, malice, cruelty, falsehood, devils, the seeming glooms[2] of a sweet Lord, meet you in the teeth, if ye then, as a captive of hope, as one fettered in hope's prison, run to your stronghold, even from God glooming,[3] to God glooming,[3] and believe the salvation of the Lord in the dark, which is your only victory,—your enemies, that are but pieces of malicious clay, shall die as men, and be confounded. But, that your troubles are many

[1] Oh, that. [2] Frowns. [3] Frowning.

at once, and arrows come in from all airths,[1] from country, friends, wife, children, foes, estate, and right-down from God who is the hope and stay of your soul, I confess is more, and very heavy to be borne: yet all these are not more than grace; all these bits of coals casten into your sea of mercy, cannot dry it up. Your troubles are many and great; yet not an ounce-weight beyond the measure of infinite wisdom, I hope, nor beyond the measure of grace that he is to bestow; for our Lord never yet brake the back of his child nor spilled[2] his own work. Nature's plastering and counterfeit work he doth often break in shreds and putteth out a candle not lighted at the Sun of righteousness; but he must cherish his own reeds, and handle them softly; never a reed getteth a thrust with the Mediator's hand, to lay together the two ends of the reed. Oh, what bands and ligaments hath our Chirurgeon of broken spirits, to bind up all his lame and bruised ones with! Cast your disjointed spirit into his lap; and lay your burden upon One who is so willing to take your cares and your fears off you, and to exchange and niffer[3] your crosses, and to give you new for old, and gold for iron,—even to give you garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

IV. It is true, in great part, what ye write of this Kirk, that the letter of religion only is reformed, and scarce that. I do not believe our Lord will build his Zion in this land, upon this skin of reformation. So long as our scum remaineth, and our heart-idols are keeped, this work must be at a stand; and, therefore, our Lord must yet sift this land, and search us with candles; and I know, that he will give and not sell us, his Kingdom. His grace, and our remaining guiltiness must be compared, and the one must be seen in the glory of it, and the other in the sinfulness of it. But I desire to believe, and would gladly hope to see, that the glancing and shining lustre of glory coming from the diamonds and stones set in the crown of our Lord Jesus, shall cast rays and beams many thousand miles about. I hope that Christ is upon a great marriage; and that his wooing and suiting[4] of his excellent bride doth take its beginning from us, the ends of the earth. Oh, what joy and what glory would I judge it, if my heaven should be suspended, till I might have leave to run on foot to be a witness of that marriage-glory, and see Christ put on the glory of his last married bride, and his last marriage-love on earth; when he shall enlarge his love-bed, and set it upon the top of the mountains, and take in the Elder Sister, the Jews, and the fulness of the Gentiles! It were Heaven's honor and glory upon earth, to be his lackey, to run at his horse's foot, and hold up the train of his marriage-robe royal, in the day of our high and royal Solomon's espousals. But, oh, what glory to have a seat or bed in the chariot of King Jesus, that is bottomed with gold, and paved, and lined over, and floored within with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem! (Cant. iii. 10.) To lie upon such a King's love, were a bed next to the Flower of Heaven's glory.

[1] Quarters. [2] Spoiled. [3] Barter. [4] Courting.

V. I am sorry to hear you speak in your letter, of a "God angry at you," and of "the sense of his indignation, which only ariseth from suffering for Jesus"—all that is now come upon you. Indeed "apprehended wrath" flameth out of such ashes as "apprehended sin," but not from "suffering for Christ." But, suppose ye were in Hell, for by-gones[1] and for old debt—I hope ye owe Christ a great sum of charity, to believe the sweetness of his love. I know what it is to sin in that kind. It is to sin out, if it were possible, the unchangeableness of a Godhead out of Christ, and to sin away a lovely and unchangeable God. Put more honest apprehensions upon Christ. Put on his own mask upon his face, and not your veil made of unbelief, which speaketh as if he borrowed love to you from you and your demerits and sinful deservings. Oh, no! Christ is man, but he is not like man. He hath man's love in Heaven, but it is lustred with God's love, and it is very God's love ye have to do with—when your wheels go about, he standeth still. Let God be God, and be ye a man, and have ye the deserving of man, and the sin of one, who hath suffered your Well-beloved to slip away; nay, hath refused him entrance, when he was knocking, till his head and locks were frozen: yet, what is that to him? His book keepeth your name, and is not printed, and re-printed, and changed, and corrected. And why, but he should go to his place and hide himself? Howbeit his departure be his own good work, yet the belief of it, in that manner, is your sin. But wait on till he return with salvation, and cause you to rejoice in the latter end. It is not much to complain; but rather believe than complain, and sit in the dust, and close your mouth, till he make your sown light grow again; for your afflictions are not eternal, time will end them, and so shall ye at length see the Lord's salvation. His love sleepeth not, but is still working for you. His salvation will not tarry nor linger; and suffering for him is the noblest cross that is out of Heaven. Your Lord hath the wale and choice[2] of ten thousand other crosses, beside this, to exercise you withal; but his wisdom and his love waled[3] and choosed out this for you, beside them all: and take it as a choice one, and make use of it, so as ye look to this world as your stepmother, in your borrowed prison. For it is a love-look to Heaven, and the other side of the water, that God seeketh; and this is the fruit, the flower and bloom growing out of your cross, that ye be a dead man to time, to clay, to gold, to country, to friends, wife, children, and all pieces of created nothings; for in them there is not a seat nor bottom for soul's love. Oh, what room is for your love, (if it were as broad as the sea,) up in Heaven, and in God! And what would not Christ give for your love? God gave so much for your soul; and blessed are ye if ye have a love for him, and can call in your soul's love from all idols, and can make a God of God, a God of Christ, and draw a line betwixt your heart and him.[4] If your deliverance come not, Christ's pres-

[1] By-passed matters. [2] Pick and choice. [3] Selected.
[4] Unite your heart and him by the bands of love, and the cords of a man. Hos. xi. 4.

ence and his believed love, must stand as caution[1] and surety for your deliverance, till your Lord send it in his blessed time. For Christ hath many salvations, if we could see them; and I would think it better-born comfort and joy, that cometh from the faith of deliverance, and the faith of his love, than that which cometh from deliverance itself. It is not much matter, if ye find ease to your afflicted soul, what be the means, either of your own wishing or of God's choosing—the latter, I am sure, is best, and the comforts strongest and sweetest. Let the Lord absolutely have the ordering of your evils and troubles, and put them off you, by recommending your cross and your furnace to Him who hath skill to melt his own metal, and knoweth well what to do with his furnace. Let your heart be willing that God's fire have your tin, and brass, and dross. To consent to want corruption, is a greater mercy than many professors do well know; and to refer the manner of God's physic to his own wisdom, whether it be by drawing blood, or giving sugared drinks. That he cureth sick folks without pain, it is a great point of faith; and to believe Christ's cross to be a friend, as he himself is a Friend, is also a special act of faith. But when ye are over the water, this case shall be a yesterday past a hundred years ere ye were born: and the cup of glory shall wash the memory of all this away, and make it as nothing. Only now take Christ in with you under your yoke, and let patience have her perfect work; for this haste, is your infirmity. The Lord is rising up to do you good in the latter-end; put on the faith of his salvation, and see him posting and hasting towards you.

Sir, my employments being so great, hinder me to write at more length; excuse me; I hope to be mindful of you. I shall be obliged to you, if ye help me with your prayers for this people, this College, and my own poor soul.

Grace be with you. Remember my love to your wife.

Yours, in Christ Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Feb. 13, 1640.

LETTER CCXCV.

TO THE MUCH HONORED PETER STIRLING.

MUCH HONORED AND WORTHY SIR,—I received yours, and cannot but be ashamed that mistaking love hath brought me into court[2] and account in the heart of God's children, especially of another nation. I should not make a lie of the grace of God, if I should think I have little share of it myself. Oh, how much better were it for me, to stand in the counting-table of many for a halfpenny, and to be esteemed a liker, rather than a lover of Christ! If I were weighed, vanity would bear down the scale, as having

[1] Security. [2] Influence.

weight in the balance above me, except my lovely Saviour should cast in beside me some of his borrowed worth. And, oh, if[1] I were writing now sincerely in this extenuation, which may be, and I fear is, subtile and cozening pride! I would I could love something of Heaven's worth, in you and all of your metal. Oh, how happy were I, if I could regain and conquer back from the creature my sold and lost love, that I might lay it upon Heaven's Jewel, that ever, ever blooming Flower of the highest garden, even my soul-redeeming and never-enough prized Lord Jesus! Oh, that he would wash my love, and put it on the Mediator's wheel, and refine it from its dross and tin, that I might propine[2] and gift[3] that Lord, so love-worthy, with all my love! Oh, if[1] I could set[4] a lease of thousands of years, and a suspension of my part of Heaven's glory, and frist[5] till a long day, my desired salvation, so being that I could, in this lower kitchen and under-vault of his creation, be feasted with his love, and that I might be a footstool to his glory, before men and angels! Oh, if[1] he would let out Heaven's fountain upon withered me, dry and sapless me! If I were but sick of love for his love,—and oh, how would that sickness delight me!—how sweet should that easing and refreshing pain be to my soul!

I shall be glad to be a witness to behold the kingdoms of the world become Christ's. I could stay out of Heaven many years, to see that victorious, triumphing Lord act that prophesied part of his soul-conquering love, in taking into his kingdom the Greater Sister, that Kirk of the Jews, who sometimes,[6] courted our Well-beloved for her Little Sister, (Cant. viii. 8;) to behold him set up as an ensign and banner of love, to the ends of the world. And truly, we are to believe that his wrath is ripe for the Land of graven images, and for the falling of that millstone into the midst of the sea.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, March 6, 1640.

LETTER CCXCVI.

TO THE LADY FINGASK.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Though not acquainted, yet, at the desire of a Christian, I make bold to write a line or two unto you by way of counsel—howbeit I be most unfit for that.

I hear, and I bless the Father of lights for it, that ye have a spirit set to seek God, and that the posture of your heart is to look heavenward, which is a work and cast of the Mediator Christ's right-hand, who putteth on the heart a new frame; for the which

[1] Oh, that. [2] Present. [3] Endow.
[4] Let. [5] Postpone possession of. [6] Formerly.

I would have your Ladyship, to see a tie and bond of obedience laid upon you, that all may be done, not so much from obligation of law, as from the tie of free love; that the law of ransom-paying by Christ may be the chief ground of all your obedience, seeing that ye are not under the Law, but under grace. Withal, know that unbelief is a spiritual sin, and so not seen by nature's light; and that all which conscience saith is not Scripture. Suppose that your heart bear witness against you, for sins done long ago; yet because many have pardon with God, that have not peace with themselves, ye are to stand and fall by Christ's esteem and verdict of you, and not by that which your heart saith. Suppose it may, by accident, be a good sign, to be jealous[1] of your heavenly Husband's love, yet it is a sinful sign—as there be some happy sins, (if I may speak so,) not of themselves, but because they are neighbored with faith and love. And so, worthy Lady, I would have you to hold by this, that the ancient love of an old husband standeth firm and sure; and let faith hing[2] by this small thread, that he loved you before he laid the corner-stone of the world; and, therefore, he cannot change his mind, because he is God and resteth in his love. Neither is sin in you a good reason, wherefore ye should doubt of him, or think, because sin hath put you in the courtesy and reverence of justice, that, therefore, he is wroth with you: neither is it presumption in you to lay the burden of your salvation on One mighty to save; so being that ye lay aside all confidence in yourself, your worth and righteousness. True faith is humble, and seeth no way to escape but only in Christ. And I believe that ye have put an esteem and high price upon Christ; and they cannot but believe, and so be saved, who love Christ, and to whom he is precious; for the love of Christ hath chosen Christ as a Lover; and it were not like God, if ye should choose him as your liking, and he not choose you again; nay, he hath prevented[3] you in that; for ye have not chosen him, but he hath chosen you.

Oh, consider his loveliness and beauty, and that there is nothing which can commend and make fair Heaven or earth, or the creature, that is not in him, in infinite perfection; for fair sun and fair moon are black, and think shame[4] to shine before his fairness, (Isa. xxiv. 23.) Base heavens, and excellent Jesus; weak angels, and strong and mighty Jesus; foolish angel-wisdom, and only wise Jesus; short-living creature, and long-living and ever-living Ancient of days; miserable, and sickly, and wretched are those things that are within time's circle, and only, only blessed Jesus! If ye can wind-in into his love, (and he giveth you leave to love him, and allurements also,)—what a second heaven's paradise, a young heaven's glory, is it to be hot and burned with fevers of love-sickness for him? And the more your Ladyship drink of this love, there is the more room, and the greater delight and desire for this love. Be homely,[5] and hunger for a feast and

[1] Suspicious. [2] Hang. [3] Anticipated. [4] Are ashamed.
[5] Lay aside all ceremony.

fill of his love; for that is the borders and march[1] of Heaven. Nothing hath a nearer resemblance to the color and hue and lustre of Heaven than Christ loved, and to breathe out love-words, and love-sighs for him. Remember what he is. When twenty thousand millions of Heaven's lovers have worn their hearts threadbare of love, all is nothing, yea, less than nothing, to his matchless worth and excellency. Oh, so broad and so deep as the sea of his desirable loveliness is! Glorified spirits, triumphing angels, the crowned and exalted lovers of Heaven, stand without his loveliness, and cannot put a circle on it. Oh, if[2] sin and time were from betwixt us and that royal King's love, that High Majesty, eternity's Bloom, and Flower of high lustred beauty, might shine upon pieces of created spirits, and might bedew and overflow us, who are portions of endless misery, and lumps of redeemed sin.

Alas! what do I? I but spill[3] and lose words in speaking highly of Him who will bide and be above the music and songs of Heaven, and never be enough praised by us all; to whose boundless and bottomless love I recommend your Ladyship, and am,

Your Ladyship's, in Christ Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, March 27, 1640.

LETTER CCXCVII.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER, MR. DAVID DICKSON.

REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER,—Ye look like the house whereof ye are a branch; the cross is a part of the life-rent, that lieth to all the sons of the house. I desire to suffer with you, if I could take a lift of your house-trial off you; but ye have preached it ere I knew anything of God. Your Lord may gather his roses, and shake his apples, at what season of the year he pleaseth. Each husbandman cannot make harvest when he pleaseth, as he can do. Ye are taught to know and adore his sovereignty, which he exerciseth over you, which yet is lustred with mercy. The child hath but changed a bed in the garden, and is planted up higher, nearer the sun, where he shall thrive better than in this out-field muir-ground.[4] Ye must think your Lord would not want him one hour longer; and since the date of your loan of him was expired, (as it is, if ye read the lease,) let him have his own with gain, as good reason were. I read on it an exaltation and a richer measure of grace, as the sweet fruit of your cross; and I am bold to say, that that college where your Master hath set you now, shall find it.

I am content that Christ is so homely[5] with my dear brother,

[1] Boundary. [2] Oh, that. [3] Mar.
[4] Unenclosed, unmanured, and uncultivated, worthless ground.
[5] Familiar, at home.

David Dickson, as to borrow and lend, and take and give with him; and ye know what are called the visitations of such a friend —it is to come to the house, and be homely[1] with what is yours. I persuade myself, upon his credit, that he hath left drink-money, and that he hath made the house the better of him. I envy not[2] his waking love, who saw that this water was to be passed through, and that now the number of crosses lying in our way to glory are fewer by one than when I saw you. They must decrease. It is better than any ancient or modern commentary on your text, that ye preach upon in Glasgow. Read and spell right, for he knoweth what he doeth. He is only lopping and snedding[3] a fruitful tree, that it may be more fruitful. I congratulate heartily with you his new welcome to your new charge.

Dearest brother, go on, and faint not. Something of yours is in Heaven, beside the flesh of your exalted Saviour; and ye go on after your own. Time's thread is shorter by one inch than it was. An oath is sworn, and past the seals, whether afflictions will or not, ye must grow and swell out of your shell, and live, and triumph, and reign, and be more than a conqueror. For your Captain, who leadeth you on, is more than Conqueror, and he maketh you partaker of his conquest and victory. Did not love to you compel me, I would not fetch water to the well, and speak to one who knoweth better than I can do what God is doing with him.

Remember my love to your wife, to Mr. John, and all friends there. Let us be helped by your prayers, for I cease not to make mention of you to the Lord, as I can.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, May 28, 1640.

LETTER CCXCVIII.

TO MY LADY BOYD.

Madam,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Impute it not to a disrespective[4] forgetfulness of your Ladyship, who ministered to me in my bonds, that I write not to you.

I wish that I could speak or write what might do good to your Ladyship; especially now, when I think we cannot but have deep thoughts of the deep and bottomless ways of our Lord, in taking away, with a sudden and wonderful stroke, your brethren and friends. Ye may know, that all who die for sin, die not in sin: and that "none can teach the Almighty knowledge." He answereth none of our courts, and no man can say, "What doest thou?" It is true that your brethren saw not many summers, but adore and fear the sovereignty of the great Potter, who maketh and marreth his clay-vessels, when and how it pleaseth him.

[1] Familiar, at home. [2] Grudge not at. [3] Pruning. [4] Disrespectful.

The under-garden is absolutely his own, and all that groweth in it. His absolute liberty is law-biding.[1] The flowers are his own. If some be but summer-apples, he may pluck them down before others. Oh, what wisdom is it to believe, and not to dispute; to subject the thoughts to his court, and not to repine at any act of his justice? He hath done it, all flesh be silent! It is impossible to be submissive and religiously patient, if ye stay your thoughts down among the confused rollings and wheels of second causes: as, "Oh, the place!" "Oh, the time!" "Oh, if this had been, this had not followed!" "Oh, the linking of this accident with this time and place!" Look up to the master-motion and the first wheel. See and read the decree of Heaven and the Creator of man, who breweth death to his children and the manner of it. And they see far into a mill-stone, and have eyes that make a hole to see through the one side of a mountain to the other, who can take up his ways. "How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" His providence halteth not, but goeth with even and equal legs; yet are they not the greatest sinners upon whom the tower of Siloam fell. Was not time's lease expired, and the sand of Heaven's sand-glass,[2] set by our Lord, run out? Is not he an unjust debtor who payeth due debt with chiding? I believe, Christian Lady, your faith leaveth that[3] much charity to our Lord's judgments as to believe, howbeit ye be in blood sib[4] to that cross, that yet ye are exempted and freed from the gall and wrath that is in it. I dare not deny but, (Job xviii. 15,) "the King of terrors dwelleth in the wicked man's tabernacle: brimstone shall be scattered on his habitation;" yet, madam, it is safe for you to live upon the faith of His love whose arrows are over-watered[5] and pointed with love and mercy to his own, and who knoweth how to take you and yours out of the roll and book of the dead. Our Lord hath not the eyes of flesh in distributing wrath to the thousandth generation without exception. Seeing ye are not under the Law, but under grace, and married to another Husband; wrath is not the court that you are liable to.

As I would not wish, neither do I believe, that your Ladyship doth despise, so neither faint. Read and spell aright all the words and syllables in the visitation, and miscall[6] neither letter nor syllable in it. Come along with the Lord, and see, and lay no more weight upon the Law than your Christ hath laid upon it. If the Law's bill get an answer from Christ, the curses of it can do no more. And I hope you have resolved, that, if he should grind you to powder, your dust and powder will believe his salvation.

And who can tell what thoughts of love and peace our Lord hath to your children? I trust he will make them famous in executing the written judgments upon the enemies of the Lord: "this honor have all the saints," (Psal. cxlix, 9,) and that they shall bear stones on their shoulders for building that fair city, that is called, (Ezek. xlviii. 35,) "The Lord is there." And happy shall

[1] Will abide or endure trial of law.
[2] Hour-glass.
[3] So.
[4] Akin.
[5] Plated over.
[6] Misname.

they be who have a hand in the sacking of Babel, and come out in the year of vengeance, for the controversy of Zion against the land of graven images. Therefore, madam, let the Lord make out of your Father's house any work, even of judgment, that he pleaseth. What is wrath to others, is mercy to you and your house. It is faith's work to claim and challenge loving-kindness out of all the roughest strokes of God. Do that for the Lord which ye will do for time; time will calm your heart at that which God hath done, and let our Lord have it now. What love ye did bear to friends now dead, seeing they stand now in no need of it, let it fall as just legacy to Christ. Oh, how sweet to put out many strange lovers, and to put in Christ? It is much for our half-slain affections to part with that which we believe we have right unto: but the servant's will should be our will, and he is the best servant who retaineth least of his own will, and most of his Master's.

That much wisdom must be ascribed to our Lord, that he knoweth how to lead his own in-through and out-through[1] the little time-hells, and the pieces of time-during wraths in this life; and yet keep safe his love without any blur upon the old and great seal of free election. And, seeing his mountains of brass, the mighty and strong decrees of free grace in Christ, stand sure, and the covenant standeth fast forever as the days of Heaven, let him strike and nurture.[2] His striking must be a very act of saving; seeing strokes upon his secret ones come from the soft and heavenly hand of the Mediator, and his rods are steeped and watered in that flood and river of love that cometh from the God-man's heart of our soul-loving and soul-redeeming JESUS.

I hope that ye are content to frist[3] the cautioner[4] of mankind his own conquest,[5] Heaven, till he pay it to you, and bring you to a state of glory, where he will never crook[6] a finger upon, nor lift a hand to you again. And be content, and withal greedily covetous of grace, the interest and pledge of glory. If I did not believe your crop to be on the ground, and your part of that Heaven of the saints' heaven, white and ruddy, fair, fair, and beautiful Jesus were come to the bloom and the flower, and near your hook,[7] I would not write this. But seeing time's thread is short, and ye are upon the entry of Heaven's harvest, and Christ, the field of Heaven's glory, is white and ripe-like, the losses that I wrote of to your Ladyship are but summer-showers, that will only wet your garments for an hour or two, and the sun of the New Jerusalem shall quickly dry the wet coat—especially, seeing rains of affliction cannot stain the image of God, or cause grace to cast the color. And, since ye will not alter upon Him who will not change upon you, I durst, in weakness, think myself no spiritual seer, if I should not prophesy that daylight is near, when such a morning-darkness is upon you; and that this trial of your Christian mind towards Him whom you dare not leave, howbeit he

1 From side to side, in every direction. 2 Correct. 3 Grant delay in payment to.
4 Surety. 5 Acquisition by purchase. 6 Lay. 7 Sickle.

should slay you, shall close with a doubled mercy. It is time for faith to hold fast as much of Christ as ever ye had, and to make the grip[1] stronger, and to cleave closer to him; seeing Christ loveth to be believed in, and trusted to. The glory of laying strength upon One that is mighty to save, is more than we can think. That piece of service, believing in a smiting Redeemer, is a precious part of obedience. Oh, what glory to him, to lay over the burden of our Heaven upon Him that purchased for us an eternal kingdom! Oh, blessed soul, who can adore and kiss his lovely free grace.

The rich grace of Christ be with your spirit.

Yours, at all obedience in Christ Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Oct. 15, 1640.

LETTER CCXCIX.

TO AGNES MACMATH.

Dear Sister,—If our Lord hath taken away your child, your lease of him is expired; and seeing that Christ would want him no longer, it is your part to hold your peace, and worship and adore the sovereignty and liberty that the Potter hath over the clay, and pieces of clay-nothings, that he gave life unto. And what is man, to call and summon the Almighty to his lower court down here? "for he giveth account of none of his doings." And if ye will take a loan of a child, and give him back again to our Lord, laughing, as his borrowed goods should return to him; believe that he is not gone away, but sent before; and that the change of the country should make you think, that he is not lost to you, who is found to Christ; and that he is now before you; and that the dead in Christ shall be raised again. A going-down star is not annihilate, but shall appear again. If he hath casten[2] his bloom and flower, the bloom is fallen in Heaven, into Christ's lap. And as he was lent a while to time, so is he given now to eternity, which will take yourself. And the difference of your shipping and his to Heaven and Christ's shore, the land of life, is only in some few years, which weareth every day shorter, and some short and soon-reckoned summers will give you a meeting with him. But what, with him? nay, with better company, with the Chief and Leader of the heavenly troops, that are riding on white horses, that are triumphing in glory.

If death were a sleep that had no wakening, we might sorrow; but our Husband shall quickly be at the bedsides of all that lie sleeping in the grave, and shall raise their mortal bodies. Christ was death's Cautioner,[3] who gave his word to come and loose all the clay-pawns, and set them at his own right hand; and our Cautioner,[3] Christ, hath an act of law-surety upon death to render

[1] Grasp. [2] Shed. [3] Surety.

back his captives. And that Lord Jesus, who knoweth the turnings and windings that are in that black trance[1] of death, hath numbered all the steps of the stair up to Heaven. He knoweth how long the turnpike[2] is, or how many pair of stairs high it is; for he ascended that way himself, (Rev. i. 18,) "I was dead, and am alive." And now he liveth at the right-hand of God, and his garments have not so much as a smell of death.

Your afflictions smell of the children's case. The bairns of the house are so nurtured: and suffering is no new life, it is but the rent of the son's; bastards have not so much of the rent.[3] Take kindly and heartsomely with His cross who never yet slew a child with the cross. He breweth your cup: therefore drink it patiently, and with the better will. Stay and wait on till Christ loose the knot that fasteneth his cross on your back; for he is coming to deliver. And I pray you, sister, learn to be worthy of his pains, who correcteth; and let him wring, and be ye washen;[4] for He hath a father's heart and a father's hand, who is training you up, and making you meet for the high hall. This school of suffering is a preparation for the King's higher house; and let all your visitations speak all the letters of your Lord's summons. They cry—1. "O vain world!" 2. "O bitter sin!" 3. "O short and uncertain time!" 4. "O fair eternity, that is above sickness and death!" 5. "O kingly and princely Bridegroom, hasten glory's marriage, shorten time's short-spun and soon broken thread, and conquer sin!" 6. "O happy and blessed death, that golden bridge laid over by Christ my Lord, between time's clay-banks and Heaven's shore!" And the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come!" and answer ye with them, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!"

Grace be with you.

Your brother, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Oct. 15, 1640.

LETTER CCC.

TO MR. MATTHEW MOWAT.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,—What am I to answer you? Alas! my books are all bare, and show me little of God. I would fain go beyond books into his house-of-love, to himself. Dear brother, neither ye nor I are parties worthy of his love or knowledge. Ah! how hath sin bemisted[5] and blinded us, that we cannot see him? But for my poor self, I am pained and like to burst, because he will not take down the wall, and fetch his uncreated beauty, and bring his matchless, white, and ruddy face out of Heaven once-errand,[6] that I may have Heaven meeting me ere I go to it, in such a wonderful sight. Ye know that majesty and

1 Long, narrow passage. 2 Winding stair. 3 Heb. xii. 6, 7, 8.
4 Washed. 5 Bewildered. 6 On the sole errand.

love do humble, because homely [1] love to sinners dwelleth in him with majesty. Ye should give him all his own court-styles, his high and Heaven-names. What am I, to shape conceptions of my highest Lord? How broad, and how high, and how deep he is, above and beyond what these conceptions are, I cannot tell? but for my own weak practice, (which, alas! can be no rule to one so deep in love-sickness with Christ as ye are,) I would fain add to my thoughts and esteem of him, and make him more high, and would wish a heart and love ten thousand times wider than the utmost circle and curtain that goeth about the Heaven of heavens, to entertain him in that heart, and with that love. But that which is your pain, my dear brother, is mine also. I am confounded with the thoughts of him. I know that God is casten, (if I may speak so,) in a sweet mould, and lovely image, in the person of that Heaven's Jewel, the Man, Christ; and that the steps of that steep ascent and stair to the Godhead is the flesh of Christ, the New and Living Way; and there is footing for faith in that curious Ark of the humanity; therein dwelleth the Godhead, married upon our humanity. I would be in Heaven, suppose I had not another errand, than to see that dainty [2] golden Ark, and God personally looking out at ears and eyes and a body, such as we sinners have, that I might wear my sinful mouth in kisses on him for evermore; and I know, all the Three blessed Persons would be well pleased that my piece of faint and created love should first coast upon the Man, Christ. I should see them all through him.

I am called from writing by my great employments in this town, and have said nothing. But what can I say of Him? Let us go and see.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, 1640.

LETTER CCCI.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Ladyship.—I am heartily sorry that your Ladyship is deprived of such a husband, and the Lord's Kirk of so active and faithful a friend. I know your Ladyship long ago made acquaintance with that, wherein Christ will have you to be joined in a fellowship with himself, even with his own cross; and hath taught you to stay your soul upon the Lord's good-will, who giveth not account of his matters to any of us. When he hath led you through this water that was in your way to glory, there are fewer behind: and his order in dismissing us, and sending us out of the market, one before another, is to be reverenced. One year's time of Heaven shall

[1] Affable. [2] Excellent.

swallow up all sorrows, even beyond all comparison. What then will not a duration of blessedness so long as God shall live, fully and abundantly recompense? It is good that our Lord hath given a Debtor, obliged by gracious promises, for more in eternity than time can take from you. And I believe that your Ladyship hath been now many years advising and thinking what that glory will be, which is abiding the pilgrims and strangers on the earth, when they come home, and which we may think of, love and thirst for, but we cannot comprehend it nor conceive of it as it is, far less can we over-think or over-love it. Oh, so long a Chapter, or rather, so long a Volume as Christ is, in that Divinity of Glory! There is no more of him let down now, to be seen and enjoyed by his children, than as much as may feed hunger in this life, but not satisfy it. Your Ladyship is a debtor to the Son of God's cross, that is wearing out love and affiance in the creature, out of your heart by degrees; or rather the obligation standeth to His free grace who careth for your Ladyship in this gracious dispensation; and who is preparing and making ready the garments of salvation for you; and who calleth you with a new name, that the mouth of the Lord hath named; and purposeth to make you a crown of glory, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God, (Isa. lxii. 2, 3.) Ye are obliged to frist[1] him more than one heaven; and yet he craveth not a long day; it is fast coming, and is sure payment. Though ye gave no hire for him, yet hath he given a great price and ransom for you: and if the bargain were to make again, Christ would give no less for you, than what he hath already given—he is far from rueing. I shall wish you no more, till time be gone out of the way, than the earnest of that which he hath purchased and prepared for you; which can never be fully preached, written, or thought of, since it hath not entered into the heart to consider it.

So, recommending your Ladyship to the rich grace of our Lord Jesus, I am, and rest, your Ladyship's,

At all respective[2] observance in Christ Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's.

LETTER CCCII.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY LADY BOYD.

MADAM,—I doubt not but the debt of many more than ordinary favors to this land, layeth guiltiness upon this nation. The Lord hath put us in his books as a favored people, in the sight of the nations; but we pay not to him the rent of the vineyard: and we might have had a gospel at an easier rate than this Gospel; but it would have had but as much life as ink and paper have. We stand obliged to him, who hath in a manner forced his love on us, and would but love us against our will.

[1] Grant delay in payment. [2] Respectful.

Anent[1] read prayers, madam, I could never see precept, promise, or practice for them in God's word. Our Church never allowed them, but men took them up at their own choice. The word of God maketh reading, (1 Tim. iv. 13,) and praying, (1 Thess. v. 17,) two different worships. In reading, God speaketh to us, (2 Kings xxii. 10, 11;) in praying, we speak to God, (Psal. xxii. 2, and xxviii. 1.) I had never faith to think well of them. In my weak judgment, it were good if they were out of the service of God. I cannot think them a fruit or effect of the Spirit of adoption, seeing the user cannot say of such prayers, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer;" which the servants of God ought to say of their prayers. (Psal. xix. 14.) For such prayers are meditations set down in paper and ink, and cannot be his heart-meditations who useth them: the saints never used them, and God never commanded them: and a promise to hear any prayers, except the pouring out of the soul to God, we can never read.

As for separation from a worship for some errors of a church—the independency of single congregations, a church of visible saints, and other tenets of Brownists, they are contrary to God's word. I have a treatise at the press at London, against these conceits, as things which want God's word to warrant them. The Lord lay it not to their charge, who depart from the Covenant of God with this land, to follow such lying vanities.

I did see lately your daughter, the Lady Ardross. The Lord hath given her a child and deliverance.

Now, recommending your Ladyship to the rich grace of Christ, I rest,

Yours, at all respective[2] observance in Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's.

LETTER CCCIII.

TO JAMES MURRAY'S WIFE.

My very dear and worthy Sister,—You are truly blessed in the Lord, however a sour world gloom[3] and frown on you, if ye continue in the faith settled and grounded, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. It is good that there is a heaven, and it is not a night-dream and a fancy:—it is a wonder that men deny not that there is a heaven, as they deny there is any way to it, but of men's making. You have learned of Christ that there is a heaven; contend for it, and for Christ: bear well and submissively the hard thrust of this step-mother world, which God will not have to be yours. I confess it is hard, and would to God I were able to lighten you of your burden: but believe me,

[1] Concerning. [2] Respectful. [3] Lour.

this world, which the Lord will not have to be yours, is but the dross, refuse, and scum of God's creation, the portion of the Lord's poor hired servants, the movables, not the heritage; a hard bone cast to the dogs, holden out of the New Jerusalem, whereupon they rather break their teeth, than satisfy their appetite. It is your Father's blessing, and Christ's birthright, that our Lord is keeping for you; and persuade yourself also that, (if it be good for them and you,) your seed also shall inherit the earth; for that is promised to them, and God's bond is as good as if he would give every one of them a bond for thousand thousands. Ere ye were born, crosses in number, measure, and weight, were written for you; and your Lord will lead you through them. Make Christ sure, and the world, and the blessings of the earth shall be at Christ's back and beck. I see many professors for the fashion, professors of glass; I would make a little knock of persecution ding[1] them in twenty pieces, and the world would laugh at the sherds: therefore, make fast work; see that Christ be the ground-stone[2] of your profession: the sore wind and rain will not wash away this building; this work hath no less date than to stand for evermore. I should twenty times have perished in my affliction, if I had not laid my weak back and pressing burden both upon the Stone, the Corner-stone laid in Zion. I am not twice fain, (as the proverb[3] is,) but once and forever, of this Stone. Now the God of peace establish you to the day of the appearance of Jesus Christ.

Yours, S. R.

St. Andrew's.

LETTER CCCIV.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE LADY, MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I am a little moved at your infirmity of body and health; I hope it is to you a real warning. "And if in this life only we had hope, we should be of all men the most miserable." Sure the huge generations of the seekers of the face of Jacob's God must be in a life above the things that are now much taking[4] with us; such as to see the sun, to enjoy this life in health, and some good worldly accommodations too:—and, if we be making that sure, it is our wisdom. The times would make any that love the Lord, sick and faint, to consider how iniquity aboundeth and how dull we are in observing sins in ourselves, and how quick-sighted to find them out in others, and what bondage we are in; and yet very often, when we complain of times, we are secretly slandering the Lord's work and wise government of the world, and raising a hard report of him. "He is good and doeth good," and all his ways are equal.

[1] Knock, dash. [2] Foundation.

[3] Alluding to the Scottish proverb:—"*He maun be twice fain that sits down on a stane;* namely, fain to sit down, and fain to rise up. [4] Much set by.

Madam, I have been holding out to some others, (oh, if I could, to myself,) some more of this, to read and study God well, and make the serious thoughts of a Godhead, and a Godhead in Christ, the work, and the only work, all the day. Oh, we are little with God! and do all without God! we sleep and wake without him; we eat, we speak, we journey, we go about worldly business, and our calling without God! and, considering what deadness is upon the hearts of many, it were good that some did not pray without God, and preach and praise, and read and confer of God, without God. It is universally complained of, that there is a strange deadness upon the land, and on the hearts of his people. Oh, if we could help it! but he that watereth every moment his garden of red wine, must help it. I believe that he will burn the briers and the thorns that come against him.

I desire to remember your Ladyship to God; but little can I do that way: his everlasting good-will be with you.

Yours, in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, July 24.

LETTER CCCV.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY LADY VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

Madam,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I am glad to hear that your Ladyship is in any tolerable health; and shall pray that the Lord may be your Strength and Rock. Sure I am, that he took you out of the womb; and you have been casten on him from the breasts. I am confident, that he will not leave you till he crown the work begun in you.

There is nothing here, but divisions in the Church and Assembly:[1] for beside Brownists and Independents, (who, of all that differ from us, come nearest to walkers with God,) there are many other sects here, of Anabaptists, Libertines who are for all opinions in religion, fleshly and abominable Antinomians and Seekers who are for no church-ordinances, but expect apostles to come and reform churches; and a world of others, all against the government of presbyteries. Luther observed, when he studied to reform, that two-and-thirty sundry sects arose, (of all which I have named but a part, except those called Seekers, who were not then arisen:) he said, God should crush them, and that they should rise again; both which we see accomplished. In the Assembly, we have well-near ended the government, and are upon the power of synods, and I hope near at an end with them; and so I trust to be delivered from this prison shortly. The King hath dissolved the treaty of peace at Uxbridge, and adhereth to his sweet prelates; and would abate nothing, but a little of the rigor of their courts and a suspending of laws against the ceremonies, not a tak-

[1] The Assembly of Divines at Westminster.

ing away of them. The not prospering of your armies there in Scotland, is ascribed here to the sins of the land, and particularly to the divisions and backslidings of many from the Cause, and the not executing of justice against bloody Malignants.

My wife, here under the physicians, remembereth her service to your Ladyship. So recommending you to the rich grace of Christ, I rest,

Your Ladyship's at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

London, March 4, 1644.

LETTER CCCVI.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY LADY BOYD.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I received your letter on May 19th.

We are here debating, with much contention of disputes, for the just measures of the Lord's Temple. It pleaseth God, that sometimes enemies hinder the building of the Lord's house; but now friends, even gracious men, (so I conceive of them,) do not a little hinder the work. Thomas Goodwin, Jeremiah Burroughs, and some others, four or five, who are for the Independent way, stand in our way, and are mighty opposites to presbyterial government. We have carried through some propositions for the scripture-right of presbytery; especially in the church of Jerusalem, (Acts ii. and iv. and v. and vi. and xv.,) and the church of Ephesus, and are going on upon other grounds of truth; and, by the way, have proven[1] that ordination of pastors belongeth not to a single congregation, but to a college of presbyters, whose it is to lay hands upon Timothy and others, (1 Tim. iv. 14; 1 Tim. v. 17; Acts xiii. 1, 2, 3; Acts vi. 5, 6.) We are to prove, that one single congregation hath not power to excommunicate, which is opposed, not only by Independent men, but by many others. The truth is, we have many and grieved spirits with the work: and for my part, I often despair of the reformation of this land, which saw never anything, but the high places of their fathers', and the remnants of Babylon's pollutions; and except that, "not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord," I should think, God hath not yet thought it time for England's deliverance: for the truth is, the best of them almost have said, "A half-reformation is very fair at the first:" which is no other thing than, "It is not yet time to build the house of the Lord:" and for that cause, many houses, great and fair in the land, are laid desolate.

Multitudes of Anabaptists, Antinomians, Familists, Separatists, are here. The best of the people are of the Independent way. As for myself, I know no more, if there be a sound Christian (setting aside some, yea, not a few learned, some zealous and faithful

1 Proved.

ministers, whom I have met with,) at London, (though I doubt not but there are many,) than if I were in Spain; which maketh me bless God, that the communion of saints, how desirable soever, yet is not the thing, even that great thing, Christ and remission of sins. If Jesus were unco,[1] as his members are here, I should be in a sad and heavy condition.

The House of Peers are rotten men, and hate our Commissioners and our cause both: the life that is, is in the House of Commons, and many of them also have their religion to choose. The sorrows of a travailing woman are come on the land. Our army is lying about York, and have blocked up them of Newcastle, and six thousand Papists and Malignants, with Mr. Thomas Sydserf, and some Scottish prelates; and if God deliver them into their hands, (considering how strong the Parliament's armies are, how many victories God hath given them since they entered into covenant with him, and how weak the King is,) it may be thought the land is near a deliverance:—but I rather desire it, than believe it.

We offered this day to the Assembly a part of a Directory for worship, to shoulder out the Service-book:[2] it is taken into consideration by the Assembly.

Your son Lindsay is well; I receive letters from him almost every week.

Yours, at all obedience in God, S. R.

London, May 25.

LETTER CCCVII.

TO MISTRESS TAYLOR.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—Though I have no relation worldly or acquaintance with you, yet, (upon the testimony and importunity of your elder son, now at London where I am, but chiefly because I esteem Jesus Christ in you to be in place of all relations,) I make bold, in Christ, to speak my poor thoughts to you concerning your son lately fallen asleep in the Lord, who was some time under the ministry of the worthy servant of Christ, my fellow-laborer Mr. Blair, by whose ministry I hope he reaped no small advantage. I know that grace rooteth not out the affections of a mother, but putteth them on His wheel who maketh all things new, that they may be refined: therefore, sorrow for a dead child is allowed to you, though by measure and ounce-weights. The redeemed of the Lord have not a dominion or lordship over their sorrow and other affections, to lavish out Christ's goods at their pleasure; "For ye are not your own, but bought with a price;" and your sorrow is not your own, nor hath he redeemed you by halves; and, therefore, ye are not to make

[1] Strange. [2] Book of Common Prayer.

Christ's cross no cross. He commandeth you to weep: and that princely One who took up to Heaven with him a man's heart to be a compassionate High-Priest, became your Fellow and Companion on earth, by weeping for the dead, (John xi. 35.) And, therefore, ye are to love that cross, because it was once on Christ's shoulders before you: so that by his own practice, he hath overgilded and covered your cross with the Mediator's lustre. The cup ye drink was at the lip of sweet Jesus, and he drank of it; and so it hath a smell of his breath, and I conceive that ye love it not the worse that it is thus sugared: therefore, drink and believe the resurrection of your son's body. If one coal of Hell could fall off the exalted Head, Jesus—Jesus the Prince of the kings of the earth—and burn me to ashes, knowing I were a partner with Christ, and a fellow-sharer with him, (though the unworthiest of men,) I think that I should die a lovely death in that fire with him. The worst things of Christ, even his cross, have much of Heaven from himself; and so hath your Christian sorrow, being of kin to Christ in that kind. If your sorrow were a bastard, and not of Christ's house, (because of the relation ye have to him in conformity to his death and sufferings,) I should the more compassionate your condition: but kind and compassionate Jesus. at every sigh you give for the loss of your now glorified child, (so I believe, as is meet,) with a man's heart crieth, "Half mine."

I was not a witness to his death, being called out of the kingdom; but, if ye will credit those whom I do credit, (and I dare not lie,) he died comfortably. It is true, he died before he did so much service to Christ on earth, as I hope and heartily desire that your son Mr. Hugh, (very dear to me in Jesus Christ,) will do. But that were a real matter of sorrow, if this were not to counterbalance it, that he hath changed service-houses, but hath not changed service or master, (Rev. xxii. 3,) "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." What he could have done in this lower house, he is now upon that same service in the higher house; and it is all one, it is the same service and the same Master, only there is a change of conditions. And ye are not to think it a bad bargain for your beloved son, where he hath gold for copper and brass, eternity for time. I believe that Christ hath taught you, (for I give credit to such a witness of you, as your son Mr. Hugh,) not to sorrow because he died. All the knot[1] must be, "He died too soon, he died too young, he died in the morning of his life." This is all; but sovereignty must silence your thoughts. I was in your condition; I had but two children, and both are dead since I came hither. The supreme and absolute Former of all things, giveth not an account of any of his matters. The good Husbandman may pluck his roses, and gather in his lilies at midsummer, and, for aught I dare say, in the beginning of the first summer month; and he may transplant

[1] All that prevents the line of this dispensation from running smoothly.

young trees out of the lower ground to the higher, where they may have more of the sun, and more free air, at any season of the year. What is that to you or me? the goods are his own. The Creator of time and winds did a merciful injury, (if I dare borrow the word,) to nature, in landing the passenger so early. They love the sea too well, who complain of a fair wind and a desirable tide, and a speedy coming ashore; especially a coming ashore in that land where all the inhabitants have everlasting joy upon their heads. He cannot be too early in Heaven. His twelve hours were not short hours. And withal, if ye consider this, had ye been at his bed-side and should have seen Christ coming to him, ye would not, ye could not have adjourned Christ's free love, who would want him no longer.

And dying in another land, where his mother could not close his eyes, is not much. Who closed Moses' eyes? and who put on his winding-sheet? For aught I know, neither father nor mother, nor friend, but God only. And there is as expeditious, fair, and easy a way betwixt Scotland and Heaven, as if he had died in the very bed he was born in. The whole earth is his Father's; any corner of his Father's house is good enough to die in.

It may be that the living child, (I speak not of Mr. Hugh,) is more grief to you than the dead. Ye are to wait on, if at any time God will give him repentance. Christ waited as long possibly on you and me, certainly longer on me; and if he should deny repentance to him, I could say something to that; but I hope better things of him.

It seemeth that Christ will have this world your step-dame. I love not your condition the worse; it may be a proof that ye are not a child of this lower house, but a stranger. Christ seeth it not good only, but your only good, to be led thus to Heaven. And think this a favor, that he hath bestowed on you free, free grace, that is, mercy without hire;—ye paid nothing for it. And who can put a price upon anything of royal and pricely Jesus Christ? And God hath given to you to suffer for him the spoiling of your goods. Esteem it as an act of free grace also. Ye are no loser, having himself; and I persuade myself, that if ye could prize Christ, nothing could be bitter to you.

Grace, grace be with you.

Your brother, and wellwisher, S. R.

London, 1645.

LETTER CCCVIII.

TO BARBARA HAMILTON.

Worthy Friend,—Grace be to you.—I do unwillingly write unto you of that which God hath done concerning your son-in-law; only I believe, ye look not below Christ, and the highest and most supreme act of Providence, which moveth all wheels. And,

certainly, what came down enacted and concluded in the great book before the throne, and signed and subscribed with the Hand which never did wrong, should be kissed and adored by us. We see God's decrees, when they bring forth their fruits, all actions, good and ill, sweet and sour, in their time; but we see not presently the after-birth of God's decree, namely, his blessed end, and the good that he bringeth out of the womb of his holy and spotless counsel. We see his working, and we sorrow. The end of his counsel and working lieth hidden, and underneath the ground, and therefore, we cannot believe. Even amongst men, we see hewn stones, timber, and an hundred scattered parcels and pieces of an house, all under-tools,[1] hammers, and axes, and saws: yet the house, the beauty and ease of so many lodgings and ease-rooms,[2] we neither see nor understand for the present; these are but in the mind and head of the builder, as yet. We see red earth, unbroken clods, furrows and stones; but we see not summer lilies, roses, and the beauty of a garden. If ye give the Lord time to work, (as often he that believeth not maketh haste, but not speed,) his end is under ground; and ye shall see it was your good, that your son hath changed dwelling-places, but not his Master. Christ thought good to have no more of his service here; yet, (Rev. xxii. 3,) "His servants shall serve him." He needeth not us nor our service, either on earth or in heaven. But ye are to look to Him who giveth the hireling both his leave[3] and his wages, for his naked aim and purpose to serve Christ, as well as for his labors. It is put up in Christ's account that such a laborer did sweat forty years in Christ's vineyard; howbeit he got not leave to labor so long, because He who accepteth of the will for the deed, counteth so. None can teach the Lord to lay an account—he numbereth the drops of rain, and knoweth the stars by their names,—it would take as much studying as to give a name to every star in the firmament, great or small.

See Lev. x. 3, "And Aaron held his peace." Ye know his two sons were slain, whilst they offered strange fire to the Lord. Command your thoughts to be silent. If the soldiers of Newcastle had done this, ye might have stomached; but the weapon was in another hand. Hear the rod what it preacheth, and see the name of God, (Micah vi. 9;) and know that there is somewhat of God and Heaven in the rod. The majesty of the unsearchable and bottomless ways and judgments of God is not seen in the rod, and the seeing of them requireth the eyes of the man of wisdom. If the sufferings of some other with you in that loss could ease you, ye want them not. But He can do no wrong, He cannot halt; His goings are equal, who hath done it. I know our Lord aimeth at mortification; let him not come in vain to your house, and lose the pains of a merciful visit. God, the Founder, never melteth in vain, howbeit to us he seemeth often to lose both fire and metal. But I know ye are more in this work than I can be. There is no cause to faint or be weary.

[1] Lesser tools. [2] Rooms for repose. [3] Discharge.

Grace be with you; and the rich consolations of Jesus Christ sweeten your cross, and support you under it. I rest,

Yours, in his Lord and Master, S. R.

London, Oct. 15, 1645.

LETTER CCCIX.

TO MISTRESS HUME.

Loving Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—If ye have anything better than the husband of your youth, ye are Jesus Christ's debtor for it; pay not then your debts with grudging. Sorrow may diminish from the sweet fruit of righteousness; but quietness, silence, submission, and faith, put a crown upon your sad losses. Ye know whose voice the voice of a crying rod is, (Micah vi. 9.) The name and majesty of the Lord is written on the rod; read and be instructed. Let Christ have the room of the husband. He hath now no need of you, or of your love; for be enjoyeth as much of the love of Christ, as his heart can be capable of. I confess that it is a dear-bought experience, to teach you to undervalue the creature; yet it is not too dear, if Christ think it so. I know, that the disputing of your thoughts against his going thither, the way and manner of his death, the instruments, the place, the time, will not ease your spirits, except ye rise higher than second causes, and be silent because the Lord hath done it. If we measure the goings of the Almighty and his ways, the bottom whereof we see not, we quite mistake God. Oh, how little a portion of God do we see! He is far above our ebb[1] and narrow thoughts. He ruled the world in wisdom, ere we, creatures of yesterday, were born, and will rule it when we shall be lodging beside the worms and corruption. Only learn heavenly wisdom, self-denial, and mortification by this sad loss. I know that it is not for nothing, (except ye deny God to be wise in all he doeth,) that ye have lost one in earth. There hath been too little of your love and heart in Heaven, and, therefore, the jealousy of Christ hath done this. It is a mercy that he contendeth with you and all your lovers. I should desire no greater favor for myself than that Christ laid a necessity, and took on such bonds upon himself: —"Such a one I must have, and such a soul I cannot live in heaven without," (John x. 16,) And, believe it, it is incomprehensible love, that Christ saith, "If I enjoy the glory of my Father, and the crown of Heaven far above men and angels, I must use all means, though ever so violent, to have the company of such a one forever and ever." If, with the eyes of wisdom, as a child of wisdom, ye justify your mother, the Wisdom of God, (whose child ye are,) ye will kiss and embrace this loss, and see much of Christ in it. Believe and submit; and refer the income of the consolations of Jesus, and the event of the trial to your heavenly

[1] Shallow.

Father, who numbereth all your hairs. And put Christ into his own room in your love; it may be he hath either been out of his own place, or in a place of love, inferior to his worth. Repair Christ in all his wrongs done to him, and love him for a Husband; and He that is a husband to the widow, will be that to you which he hath taken from you.

Grace be with you.

Your sympathizing brother, S. R.

London Oct. 15, 1645.

LETTER CCCX.

TO THE VISCOUNTESS KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to your Ladyship.—Though Christ lose no time; yet, when sinful men drive his chariot, the wheels of his chariot move slowly. The woman Zion, as soon as she travailed, brought forth her children; yea, (Isa. lxvi. 7,) "Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child;" yet the deliverance of the people was with the woman's going with child seventy years—that is more than nine months. There be many oppositions in carrying on the work; but I hope that the Lord will build his own Zion, and evidence to us that it is done, "not by might nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord."

Madam, I have heard of your infirmities of body, and sickness. I know the issue shall be mercy to you; and that God's purpose, which lieth hidden under ground to you, is to commend the sweetness of his love and care to you from your youth. And if all the sad losses, trials, sicknesses, infirmities, griefs, heaviness and inconstancy of the creature be expounded, (as sure I am they are,) the rods of the jealousy of an Husband in Heaven, contending with all your lovers on earth, (though there were millions of them,) for your love, to fetch more of your love home to Heaven, to make it single, unmixed and chaste, to the Fairest in Heaven and earth, to Jesus the Prince of ages, ye will forgive (to borrow that word,) every rod of God, and "not let the sun go down on your wrath," against any messenger of your afflicting and correcting Father. Since your Ladyship cannot but see that the mark at which Christ hath aimed, these twenty-four years and above, is, to have the company and fellowship of such a sinful creature, in Heaven with him for all eternity; and, because he will not, (such is the power of his love,) enjoy his Father's glory, and that crown due to him by eternal generation, without you, by name, (John xvii. 24; x. 16; xiv. 3;) therefore, madam, believe no evil of Christ: listen to no hard reports that his rods make of him to you: he hath loved you, and washed you from your sins—and what would ye have more? Is that too little, except he adjourn all crosses, till ye be where ye shall be out of all capacity to sigh

or be crossed? I hope that ye can desire no more, no greater, nor more excellent suit, than Christ, and the fellowship of the Lamb for evermore. And if that desire be answered in Heaven, (as I am sure it is, and ye cannot deny but it is made sure to you,) the want of these poor accidents, of a living husband, of many children, of an healthful body, of a life of ease in the world, without one knot in the rush, are nobly made up, and may be comfortably borne.

Grace, grace be with your Ladyship.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in Christ, S. R.

London, Oct. 16, 1645.

LETTER CCCXI.

TO BARBARA HAMILTON.

Loving Sister,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I have heard with grief, that Newcastle hath taken one more in a bloody account, than before, even your son-in-law, and my friend; but I hope ye have learned that much of Christ as not to look to wheels rolled round about on earth. Earthen vessels are not to dispute with their Former. Pieces of sinning clay, may, by reasoning and contending with the Potter, mar the work of Him "who hath his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem;" as bullocks sweating and wrestling in the furrow, make their yoke more heavy. In quietness and rest ye shall be saved. If men do anything contrary to your heart, we may ask both, "Who did it?" and "What is done?" and "Why?" When God hath done any such thing, we are to inquire, "Who hath done it?" and to know that this cometh from the Lord, who is "wonderful in counsel;" but we are not to ask "What?" or "Why?" If it be from the Lord, as certainly there is no evil in the city without him, (Amos iii. 6,) it is enough; the fairest face of his spotless way is but coming, and ye are to believe his works as well as his word. Violent death is a sharer with Christ in his death, which was violent. It maketh not much what way we go to Heaven: the happy home is all, where the roughness of the way shall be forgotten. He is gone home to a Friend's house, and made welcome; and the race is ended: time is recompensed with eternity, and copper with gold. God's order is in wisdom. The husband goeth home before the wife; and the throng of the market shall be over ere it be long, and another generation where we now are; and at length, an empty house, and not one of mankind shall be upon the earth; within the sixth part of an hour after, the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up with fire. I fear more that Christ is about to remove, when he carrieth home so much of his plenishing[1] beforehand. We cannot teach the Almighty knowl-

[1] Furniture.

edge. When he was directing the bullet against his servant, to fetch out the soul, no wise man could cry to God, "Wrong, wrong, Lord, for he is thine own." There is no mist over His eyes who is "wonderful in counsel." If Zion be builded with your son-in-law's blood, the Lord, (deep in counsel,) can glue together the stones of Zion with blood, and with that blood which is precious in his eyes. Christ hath fewer laborers in his vineyard than he had, but some more witnesses for his Cause and the Lord's Covenant with the Three Nations. What is Christ's gain is not your loss. Let not that which is his holy and wise will, be your unbelieving sorrow.

Though I really judge that I had interest in his dead servant; yet, because he now liveth to Christ, I quit the hopes which I had of his successful laboring in the ministry. I know he now praiseth the grace that he was to preach: and if there were a better thing on his head now in Heaven than a crown, or anything more excellent than Heaven, he would cast it down before His feet who sitteth on the throne. Give glory, therefore, to Christ, as he now doeth, and say, "Thy will be done."

The grace, and consolation of Christ be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

London, Nov. 15, 1645.

LETTER CCCXII.

TO A CHRISTIAN FRIEND, UPON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

WORTHY FRIEND,—I desire to suffer with you, in the loss of a loving and good wife, now gone before, (according to the method and order of Him, of whose understanding there is no searching out,) whither ye are to follow. He that made yesterday to go before this day, and the former generation, in birth and life, to have been before this present generation, and hath made some flowers to grow and die and wither in the month of May, and others in June, cannot be challenged[1] in the order he hath made of things without souls; and some order he must keep also here, that one might bury another; therefore, I hope, ye shall be dumb and silent, because the Lord hath done it. What creatures or undercauses do in sinful mistakes, are ordered in wisdom by your Father, at whose feet your own soul and your Heaven lieth, and so the days of your wife. If the place she hath left were any other than a prison of sin, and the home she is gone to any other than where her Head and Saviour is King of the land, your grief had been more rational. But I trust your faith of the resurrection of the dead in Christ to glory and immortality, will lead you to suspend your longing for her, till the morning and dawning of that day, when the Archangel shall descend with a shout, to gather all the

[1] Found fault with.

prisoners out of the grave up to himself. To believe this is best for you; and to be silent, because He hath done it, is your wisdom.

It is much to come out of the Lord's school of trial wiser and more experienced in the ways of God, and it is our happiness when Christ openeth a vein, that he taketh nothing but ill blood from his sick ones. Christ hath skill to do, and, (if our corruption mar not,) the art of mercy in correcting. We cannot of ourselves take away the tin, the lead, and the scum that remaineth in us; and if Christ be not Master-of-work, and if the furnace go its lone,[1] (he not standing nigh the melting of his own vessel,) the labor were lost, and the Founder should melt in vain. God knoweth some of us have lost much fire, sweating and pains to our Lord Jesus; and the vessel is almost marred, the furnace and rod of God spilled,[3] and day-light burnt, and the reprobate metal not taken away, so as some are to answer to the Majesty of God for the abuse of many good crosses, and rich afflictions lost without the quiet fruit of righteousness:—and it is a sad thing when the rod is cursed, that never fruit shall grow on it. And except Christ's dew fall down, and his summer-sun shine, and his grace follow afflictions, to cause them to bring forth fruit to God, they are so fruitless to us, that our evil ground—rank and fat enough for briers—casteth up a crop of noisome weeds. "The rod," (as the prophet saith, Ezek. vii. 10, 11,) "blossometh, pride buddeth forth, violence riseth up into a rod of wickedness:"—and all this hath been my case under many rods, since I saw you.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

London, 1645.

LETTER CCCXIII.

TO A CHRISTIAN BROTHER.

Reverend, and beloved in the Lord,—It may be that I have been too long silent, but I hope that ye will not impute it to forgetfulness of you.

As I have heard of the death of your daughter, with heaviness of mind on your behalf; so am I much comforted, that she hath evinced to yourself and other witnesses the hope of the Resurrection of the dead. As sown corn is not lost, (for there is more hope of that which is sown than of that which is eaten, 1 Cor. xv. 42,) so also is it in the Resurrection of the dead; the body "is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory." I hope that ye wait for the crop and harvest, (1 Thes. iv. 14,) "for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also who sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Then they are not lost who are gathered into

[1] By itself alone. [2] Cost in vain. [3] Spoiled.

that Congregation of the First-born, and the General Assembly of the Saints. Though we cannot outrun nor overtake them that are gone before, yet we shall quickly follow them; and the difference is, that she hath the advantage of some months or years of the crown, before you and her mother. And we do not take it ill, if our children outrun us in the life of grace; why then are we sad, if they outstrip us in the attainment of the life of glory? It would seem that there is more reason to grieve that children live behind us, than that they are glorified and die before. All the difference is in some poor hungry accidents of time, less or more, sooner or later; so the godly child, though young, died an hundred years old; and ye could not now have bestowed her better, though the choice was Christ's, not yours.

And I am sure, sir, ye cannot now say, that she is married against the will of her parents. She might more readily, if alive, fall into the hands of a worse husband: but can ye think that she could have fallen into the hands of a better? And if Christ marry with your house, it is your honor, not any cause of grief, that Jesus should portion any of yours, ere she enjoy your portion —is it not great love? The patrimony is more than any other could give; as good a husband is impossible; to say a better, is blasphemy. The King and Prince of ages can keep them better than ye can do. While she was alive, ye could intrust her to Christ, and recommend her to his keeping; now by an after-faith ye have resigned her unto Him in whose bosom do sleep all that are dead in the Lord. Ye would have lent her to glorify the Lord upon earth, and he hath borrowed her, (with promise to restore her again, 1 Cor. xv. 53; 1 Thes. iv. 15, 16,) to be an organ of the immediate glorifying of himself in Heaven. Sinless glorifying of God is better than sinful glorifying of him. And sure your prayers concerning her are fulfilled. I shall desire, if the Lord shall be pleased the same way to dispose of her mother, that ye have the same mind. Christ cannot multiply injuries upon you; if the fountain be the love of God, (as I hope it is,) ye are enriched with losses.

Ye knew all I can say better, before I was in Christ, than I can express it. Grace be with you.

Yours, in Christ Jesus, S. R.

London, Jan. 6, 1646.

LETTER CCCXIV.

TO A CHRISTIAN GENTLEWOMAN.

Mistress,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—If death, which is before you and us all, were any other thing than a friendly dissolution, and a change, not a destruction of life, it would seem a hard voyage, to go through such a sad and dark trance,[1] so

[1] Long, narrow passage.

thorny a valley, as is the wages of sin. But I am confident, the way ye know, though your foot never trod in that black shadow. The loss of life is gain to you. If Christ Jesus be the Period, the End and Lodging-home, at the end of your journey, there is no fear, ye go to a Friend. And since ye have had a communion with him in this life, and he hath a pawn or pledge of yours, even the largest share of your love and heart, ye may look death in the face with joy. If the heart be in Heaven, the remnant of you cannot be kept the prisoner of the Second death. But though he be the same Christ in the other life, that ye found him to be here, yet he is so far in his excellency, beauty, sweetness, irradiations and beams of majesty, above what he appeared here, when he is seen as he is, that ye shall misken[1] him, and he shall appear a new Christ. And his kisses, breathings, embracements, the perfume, the ointment of his name poured out on you, shall appear to have more of God, and a stronger smell of Heaven, of eternity, of a Godhead, of majesty and glory there than here; as water at the fountain, apples in the orchard and beside the tree, have more of their native sweetness, taste and beauty, than when transported to us some hundred miles.

I mean not that Christ can lose any of his sweetness in the carrying, or that he in his Godhead and loveliness of presence, can be changed to the worse, betwixt the little spot of the earth that ye are in, and the right hand of the Father, far above all heavens: but the change will be in you, when ye shall have new senses, and the soul shall be a more deep and more capacious vessel, to take in more of Christ; and when means, the chariot, the Gospel, that he is now carried in, and ordinances that convey him, shall be removed. Sure ye cannot now be said to see him face to face; or to drink of the wine of the highest fountain, or to take in seas and tides of fresh love immediately, without vessels midses,[2] or messengers, at the Fountain itself, as ye will do a few days hence, when ye shall be so near as to be with Christ, (Luke xxiii. 43; John xvii. 24; Phil. i. 23; 1 Thes. iv. 17.)

Ye would, no doubt, bestow a day's journey, yea, many days' journey on earth, to go up to Heaven, and fetch down anything of Christ; how much more may ye be willing to make a journey to go in person to Heaven, (it is not lost time, but gained eternity,) to enjoy the full Godhead?—and then, in such a manner as he is there, not in his week-days' apparel, as he is here with us, in a drop or the tenth part of a night's dewing of grace and sweetness; but he is there in his marriage-robe of glory, richer, more costly, more precious, in one hem or button of that garment of Fountain-majesty than a million of worlds. Oh, the well is deep! Ye shall then think that preachers, and sinful ambassadors on earth, did but spill[3] and mar his praises, when they spoke of him, and preached his beauty. Alas! we but make Christ black and less lovely, in making such insignificant, and dry, and cold, and low expressions of his highest and transcendent super-excellency to

[1] Not recognize. [2] Mediums. [3] Spoil.

the daughters of Jerusalem. Sure, I have often, for my own part, sinned in this thing. No doubt angels do not fulfil their task according to their obligation, in that Christ kept their feet from falling with the lost devils; though I know they are not behind in going to the utmost of created power—but there is sin in our praising, and sin in the quantity, besides other sins. But I must leave this; it is too deep for me. Go and see, and we desire to go with you; but we are not masters of our own diet. If in that last journey ye tread on a serpent in the way, and thereby wound your heel, as Jesus Christ did before you, the print of the wound shall not be known at the resurrection of the just.

Death is but an awsome[1] step over time and sin to sweet Jesus Christ, who knew and felt the worst of death; for death's teeth hurt him. We know death hath no teeth now, no jaws, for they are broken. It is a free prison, citizens pay nothing for the grave; the jailer, who had the power of death, is destroyed:—praise and glory be to the First-begotten of the dead.

The worst possible that may be, is, that ye leave behind you, children, husband, and the Church of God in miseries; but ye cannot get them to Heaven with you for the present. Ye shall not miss them, and Christ cannot miscount one of the poorest of his lambs. No lad, no girl, no poor one shall be a-missing, ere ye see them again, in the day that the Son shall render up the Kingdom to his Father.

The evening and the shadow of every poor hireling is coming. The sun of Christ's Church in this life is declining low. Not a soul of the militant company will be here within a few generations; our Husband will send for them all. It is a rich mercy that we are not married to time, longer than the course be finished. Ye may rejoice, that ye got not to Heaven till ye knew that Jesus is there before you; that when ye come thither, at your first entry ye may feel the smell of his ointments, his myrrh, aloes, and cassia. And this first salutation of his, will make you find it is no uncomfortable thing to die. Go and enjoy your gain; live on Christ's love while ye are here, and all the way. As for the Church which ye leave behind you, the government is upon Christ's shoulders, and he will plead for the blood of his saints. The bush hath been burning above five thousand years, and we never yet saw the ashes of this fire: yet a little while, and the vision shall not tarry; it will speak and not lie. I am more afraid of my duty, than of the Head, Christ's government. He cannot fail to bring judgment to victory. Oh, that we could wait for our hidden life! Oh, that Christ would remove the covering, draw aside the curtain of time, and rend the Heavens, and come down! Oh, that shadows and night were gone, that the day would break, and that he who feedeth among the lilies, would cry to his heavenly trumpeters, "Make ready, let us go down and fold together the four corners of the world, and marry the bride!"—His grace be with you.

[1] Awful.

Now, if I have found favor with you, and if ye judge me faithful, my last suit to you is that ye would leave me a legacy, and that is, that my name may be at the very last in your prayers; as I desire also, it may be in the prayers of those of your Christian acquaintance with whom ye have been intimate.

Your brother, in his own Lord Jesus, S. R.

London, Jan. 9, 1646.

LETTER CCCXV.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—It is the least of the princely and royal bounty of Jesus Christ, to pay a king's debts, and not to have his servants at a loss. His gold is better than yours, and his hundred-fold is the income and rent of Heaven, and far above your revenues: ye are not the first who have casten up your accounts that way. Better have Christ your factor than any other; for he tradeth to the advantage of his poor servants. But if the hundred-fold in this life be so well told,—as Christ cannot pay you with miscounting, or deferred hope,—oh, what must the rent of that Land be! which rendereth every day and hour of the years of long eternity, the whole rent of a year, yea, of more than thousand thousands of ages, even the weighty income of a rich kingdom, not every summer once, but every moment. That sum of glory will take you and all the angels telling.[1] To be a tenant to such a Landlord, where every berry and grape of the large field beareth no worse fruit than glory, fulness of joy, and pleasures that endure for evermore! I leave it to yourself to think what a summer, what a soil, what a garden must be there; and what must be the commodities of that highest land, where the sun and the moon are under the feet of the inhabitants. Surely the land cannot be bought with gold, blood, banishment, loss of father and mother, husband, wife, children.

We but dwell here, because we can do no better. It is need, not virtue, to be sojourners in a prison; to weep and sigh, and, alas! to sin sixty or seventy years in a land of tears. The fruits that grow here are all seasoned and salted with sin. Oh, how sweet is it, that the company of the first-born should be divided into two great bodies of an army, and some in their country, and some in the way to their country! If it were no more than once to see the face of the Prince of this good land, and to be feasted for eternity with the fatness, sweetness, dainties of the rays and beams of matchless glory, and incomparable fountain-love, it were a well-spent journey to creep hands and feet through seven deaths and seven hells, to enjoy him up at the well-head. Only let us not weary—the miles to that land are fewer and shorter than

[1] *To take one telling*, to require all one's powers to tell.

when we first believed. Strangers are not wise to quarrel with their host, and complain of their lodging. It is a foul way, but a fair home. Oh, that I had but such grapes and clusters out of the land as I have sometimes seen and tasted in the place whereof your Ladyship maketh mention! but the hope of it in the end is a heartsome[1] convoy in the way. If I see little more of the gold till the race be ended, I dare not quarrel. It is the Lord!—I hope his chariot will go through these Three Kingdoms, after our suffering shall be accomplished.

Grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's, in Jesus Christ, S. R.

London, Jan. 26, 1646.

LETTER CCCXVI.

TO MR. J. G.

Reverend, and dear Brother,—I shall with my soul desire the peace of these kingdoms, and I do believe it will at last come, as a river and as the mighty waves of the sea; but, oh, that we were ripe and in readiness to receive it! The preserving of two or three, or four or five berries, in the outmost boughs of the olive-tree, after the vintage, is like to be a great matter, ere all be done; yet I know that a cluster in both kingdoms shall be saved, for a blessing is in it. But it is not, I fear, so near to the dawning of the day of salvation, but the clouds must send down moe showers of blood to water the vineyard of the Lord, and to cause it to blossom. Scotland's scum is not yet removed; nor is England's dross and tin taken away; nor the filth of our blood "purged by the spirit of judgment, and the spirit of burning"—but I am too much on this sad subject.

As for myself, I do esteem nothing out of Heaven, and next to a communion with Jesus Christ, more, than to be in the hearts and prayers of the saints. I know that he feedeth there among the lilies, till the day break: but I am at a low ebb, as to any sensible communion with Christ; yea, as low as any soul can be, and do scarce know where I am; and do now make it a question, if any can go to Him who dwelleth in light inaccessible, through nothing but darkness? Sure, all that come to Heaven, have a stock in Christ; but I know not where mine is. It cannot be enough for me to believe the salvation of others, and to know Christ to be the Honeycomb, the Rose of Sharon, the Paradise and Eden of the saints and first-born written in Heaven, and not to see after the borders of that Good Land. But what shall I say? Either this is the Lord making grace a new creation, where there is pure nothing and sinful nothing to work upon, or I am gone.

I should count my soul engaged to yourself, and others there

[1] Gladsome.

with you, if ye would but carry to Christ for me a letter of cyphers[1] and nonsense, (for I know not now to make language of my condition;) only showing that I have need of his love: for I know many fair and washen[2] ones stand now in white before the throne, who were once as black as I am. If Christ pass his word to wash a sinner, it is less to him, than a word to make fair angels of black devils! only let the art of free grace be engaged. I have not a cautioner[3] to give surety, nor doth a Mediator, such as he is in all perfection, need a mediator: but what I need, he knoweth. Only, it is his depth of wisdom, to let some pass millions of miles over score in debt, that they may stand, between the winning and the losing, in need of more than ordinary free grace. Christ hath been multiplying grace by mercy above these five thousand years; and the latter-born heirs have so much greater guiltiness, that Christ hath passed moe experiments and multiplied essays of heart-love on others, by misbelieving, after it is past all question, many hundreds of ages, that Christ is the undeniable and now uncontroverted Treasurer of multiplied redemptions. So now he is saying, "The more of the disease there is, the more of Physician's art of grace and tenderness there must be." Only, I know, that no sinner can put infinite grace to it, so as the Mediator shall have difficulty or much ado, to save this or that man:—millions of hells of sinners cannot come near to exhaust infinite grace.

I pray you, (remembering my love to your wife, and friends there,) let me find that I have solicitors there amongst your acquaintance; and forget not Scotland.

Your brother, in Jesus Christ, S. R.

London, Jan. 30, 1646.

LETTER CCCXVII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—It is too like that the Lord's controversy with these two nations is but yet beginning, and that we are ripened and white for the Lord's sickle.

For the particular condition that your Ladyship is in, another might speak, (if they would say all,) of more sad things. If there was not a Fountain of free grace to water dry ground, and an uncreated Wind to breathe on withered and dry bones, we were gone. The wheels of Christ's chariot to pluck us out of the womb of many deaths, are winged like eagles. All I have, is, to desire to believe, that Christ will show all good-will to save; and as for your Ladyship, I know that our Lord Jesus carrieth on no design against you, but seeketh to save and redeem you. He lieth not in wait for your falls, except it be to take you up. His way of redeeming is ravishing and taking; there are more mir-

[1] Nothings. [2] Washed. [3] Surety.

acles of glorified sinners in Heaven, than can be on earth. Nothing of you, madam, nay, not even your leaf, can wither.

Verily, it is a king's life to follow the Lamb. But when ye see him in his own country at home, ye will think ye never saw him before: "He shall be admired of all them that believe," (2 Thes. i. 10.) Ye may judge how far all your now sad days, and tossings, changes, losses, wants, conflicts, shall then be below you. Ye look to the cross,—now it is above your head and seemeth to threaten death, as having a dominion; but it shall then be so far below your thoughts, or your thoughts so far above it, that ye shall have no leisure to lend one thought to old-dated [1] crosses, in youth, in age, in this country or in that, from this instrument or from another; except it be to the heightening of your consolation, being now got above and beyond all these.

Old age, and, "waxing old as a garment," is written on the fairest face of the creation, (Psal. cii. 26.) Death, from Adam to the Second Adam's appearance, playeth the king and reigneth over all. The prime Heir died; his children, whom the Lord hath given, follow him: and we may speak freely of the life which is here; were it Heaven, there were not much gain in godliness—but there is a rest for the people of God. Christ-man possesseth it now one thousand six hundred years before many of his members; but it weareth not out.

Grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's, in Christ Jesus, S. R.

London, Feb. 16, 1646.

LETTER CCCXVIII.

TO THE LADY ARDROSS.

Madam,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—It hath seemed good, as I hear, to Him who hath appointed the bounds for the number of our months, to gather in a sheaf of ripe corn, in the death of your Christian mother, into his garner. It is the more evident that winter is near, when apples, without violence of wind, fall of their own accord off the tree. She is now above the winter, with a little change of place, not of a Saviour; only she enjoyeth Him now, without messages and in his own immediate presence, from whom she heard by letters and messengers before. I grant that death is to her a very new thing, but Heaven was prepared of old; and Christ,—as enjoyed in his highest throne, and as loaded with glory, and incomparably exalted above men and angels, having such a heavenly circle of glorified harpers and musicians above, compassing the throne with a song,—is to her a new thing; but so new, as the first summer-rose, or the first fruits of that heavenly field; or as a new paradise to a traveller, broken

[1] Antiquated.

and worn out of breath with the sad occurrences of a long and dirty way.

Ye may easily judge, madam, what a large recompense is made to all her service, her walking with God, and her sorrows, with the first cast of the soul's eye upon the shining and admirably beautiful face of the Lamb that is in the midst of that fair and white army which is there, and with the first draught and taste of the Fountain of life, fresh and new at the well-head; to say nothing of the enjoying of that face, without date, for more than this term of life which we now enjoy. And it cost her no more to go thither, than to suffer death to do her this piece of service: for by Him who was dead, and is alive, she was delivered from the Second Death. What then is the First death to the Second? Not a scratch of the skin of a finger, to the endless Second Death. And now she sitteth for eternity mail-free,[1] in a very considerable land, which hath more than four summers in the year. Oh, what spring-time is there! Even the smelling of the odors of that great and eternally blooming Rose of Sharon forever and ever! What a singing life is there! There is not a dumb bird in all that large field; but all sing and breathe out heaven, joy, glory, dominion, to the High Prince of that new-found Land. And, verily, the land is the sweeter, that Jesus Christ paid so dear a rent for it, and he is the glory of the Land: all which, I hope, doth not so much mitigate and allay your grief for her part, (as truly this should seem sufficient,) as the unerring expectation of the dawning of that day upon yourself, and the hope ye have of the fruition of that same King and Kingdom to your own soul. Certainly the hope of it, when things look so dark-like on both kingdoms, must be an exceedingly great quickening to languishing spirits, who are far from home while we are here. What misery, to have both a bad way all the day, and no hope of lodging at night; but he hath taken up your lodging for you.

I can say no more now; but I pray that the very God of peace may establish your heart to the end. I rest,

Madam, Your Ladyship's,

At all respective[2] obedience in the Lord, S. R.

London, Feb. 24, 1646.

LETTER CCCXIX.

TO M. O.

Sir,—I can write nothing for the present concerning these times, whatever others may think, but that which speaketh wrath and judgment to these kingdoms. If ever ye, or any of that land, received the Gospel in truth, (as I am confident ye and they did,) there is here a great departure from that faith, and our suf-

[1] Rent-free. [2] Respectful

ferings are not yet at an end. However, I dare testify and die for it, that once Christ was revealed in the power of his excellency and glory to the saints there, and in Scotland, of which I was a witness. I pray God that none deceive you, or take the crown from you. Hell, or the gates of Hell, cannot ravel, mar, nor undo, what Christ hath once done amongst you. It may be, that I am incapable of new light, and cannot receive that spirit whereof some vainly boast; but that "which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled," even "the word of life," (1 John i. 1,) hath been declared to you. Thousands of thousands, walking in that light and that good old way, have gone to Heaven, and are now before the throne. Truth is but one, and hath no numbers. Christ and Antichrist are both now in the camp, and are come to open blows. Christ's poor ship saileth in the sea of blood, the passengers are so sea-sick of a high fever, that they miscall[1] one another: Christ, I hope, will bring the broken bark to land. I had rather swim for life and death on an old plank, or a broken board, to land with Christ, than enjoy the rotten peace we have hitherto had. It is like that the Lord will take a severe course with us, to cause the children of the family to agree together. I conceive that Christ hath a great design of free grace to these lands; but his wheels must move over mountains and rocks. He never yet wooed a bride on earth but in blood, in fire, and in the wilderness. A cross of our own choosing, honeyed and sugared with consolations, we cannot have. I think not much of a cross, when all the children of the house weep with me and for me; and to suffer when we enjoy the communion of the saints, is not much; but it is hard when saints rejoice in the suffering of saints, and redeemed ones hurt, yea, even go nigh to hate, redeemed ones.

I confess, I imagined, there had no more been such an affliction on earth, or in the world, as that one elect angel should fight against another; but, for contempt of the communion of saints, we have need of new-born crosses, scarce ever heard of before. The saints are not Christ; there is no misjudging in him, there is much in us; and a doubt it is, if we shall have fully one heart, till we shall enjoy one Heaven. Our star-light hideth us from ourselves, and hideth us from one another, and Christ from us all —but he will not be hidden from us. I shall wish that all the sons of our Father in that land were of one mind, and that they be not shaken nor moved from the truth once received. Christ was in that Gospel, and Christ is the same now that he was in the prelates' time. That Gospel cannot sink; it will make you free, and bear you out. Christ, the subject of it, is the chosen of God; and cometh from Bozrah, with garments dyed in blood. Ireland and Scotland both must be his field, in which he shall feed and gather lilies. Suppose, (which yet is impossible,) that some had an eternity of Christ in Ireland, and a sweet summer of the

[1] Call abusive names.

Gospel, and a feast of fat things for evermore in Ireland, and that one should never come to Heaven, it should be a desirable life: the King's spikenard, Christ's perfume, his apples of love, his ointments, even down in this lower house of clay, are a choice heaven. Oh! what then is the King in his own land? where there is such a throne, so many kings' palaces, ten thousand thousands of crowns of glory, that want heads yet to fill them! Oh, so much leisure as shall be there to sing! Oh, such a Tree as groweth there in the midst of that Paradise, where the inhabitants sing eternally under its branches! To look in at a window, and see the branches burdened with the apples of life—to be the last man that shall come in thither, were too much for me.

I pray you to remember me to the Christians there; and remember our private covenant. Grace be with you.

Your friend, in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

London, April 17, 1646.

LETTER CCCXX.

TO EARLSTON, ELDER.

Sir,—I know that ye have learned long ago, ere I knew anything of Christ, that if we had the cross at our own election, we would either have law-surety for freedom from it, or then,[1] we would have it honeyed and sugared with comforts, so as the sweet should over-master the gall and wormwood. Christ knoweth how to breed the sons of his house, and ye will give him leave to take his own way of dispensation with you; and, though it be rough, forgive him: he defieth you to have as much patience to him, as he hath borne to you. I am sure that there cannot a dram-weight of gall be less in your cup: and ye would not desire he should both afflict you, and hurt your soul. When his people cannot have a providence of silk and roses, they must be content with such an one as he carveth out for them. Ye would not go to Heaven but with company; and ye may perceive that the way of those who went before you was through blood, sufferings, and many afflictions; nay, Christ, the Captain, went in over the door-threshold of Paradise, bleeding to death. I do not think but ye have learned to stoop, though ye (as others,) be naturally stiff; and that ye have found that the apples and sweet fruits, which grow on that crabbed tree of the cross, are as sweet as it is sour to bear it: especially considering, that Christ hath borne the whole complete cross, and that his saints bear but bits and chips: as the apostle saith, "The remnants," or "leavings"[2] of the cross.

I judge you ten thousand times happy, that ever ye were grace's debtor: for certainly Christ hath engaged you over head and ears to free grace: and take the debt with you to eternity, Immanuel's

[1] Otherwise. [2] Col. i. 24.

highest Land, where ye find before you a houseful of Christ's everlasting debtors—the less shame to you. Yea, and this lower kingdom of grace is but Christ's hospital and guest-house of sick folks, whom the brave and noble Physician, Christ, hath cured, upon a venture of life and death. And, if ye be near the water-side, (as I know ye are,) all that I can say is this, sir, that I feel by the smell of that land which is before you, that it is a goodly country, and it is well paid for to your hand; and He is before you who will heartily welcome you. Oh, to suck those breasts of full consolation above, and to drink Christ's new wine up in his Father's house, is some greater matter than is believed: since it was brewed from eternity for the Head of the house, and so many thousand crowned kings. Rubs in the way, where the lodging is so good, are not much.

He that brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the Eternal Covenant, establish you to the end.

Your friend and servant, in Christ Jesus, S. R.

London, May 15, 1646.

LETTER CCCXXI.

TO HIS REVEREND AND WORTHY BROTHER, MR. GEORGE GILLESPIE.

Reverend, and dear Brother,—I cannot speak to you:—the way ye know; the passage is free and not stopped; the print of the footsteps of the Forerunner is clear and manifest; many have gone before you. Ye will not sleep long in the dust before the day break. It is a far shorter piece of the hinder-end of the night to you than to Abraham and Moses; beside all the time of their bodies resting under corruption, it is as long yet to their day as to your morning-light of awaking to glory; though their spirits, having the advantage of yours, have had now the fore-start of the shore before you.

I dare say nothing against his dispensation. I hope to follow quickly. The heirs, that are not there before you, are posting with haste after you, and none shall take your lodging over your head. Be not heavy. The life of faith is now called for: doing was never reckoned in your accounts, (though Christ in and by you hath done more, than by twenty, yea, an hundred gray-haired and godly pastors;) believing now is your last. Look to that word, (Gal. ii. 20,) "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Ye know the I that Liveth, and the I that liveth not; it is not single ye that live. Christ by law liveth in the broken debtor; it is not a life by doing or holy walking, but the living of Christ in you. If ye look to yourself as divided from Christ, ye must be more than heavy. All your wants, dear brother, be upon him: ye are his debtor; grace must sum and subscribe your accounts

as paid. Stand not upon items, and small or little sanctification. Ye know that inherent holiness must stand by, when imputed is all. I fear the clay house is a taking down and undermining: but it is nigh the dawning; look to the east, the dawning of the glory is near. Your Guide is good company, and knoweth all the miles, and the ups and downs in the way:—the nearer the morning the darker.

Some travellers see the city twenty miles off, and at a distance: and yet within the eighth part of a mile they cannot see it. It is all keeping, that ye would now have, till ye need it; and if sense and fruition come both at once, it is not your loss. Let Christ tutor you as he thinketh good; ye cannot be marred nor miscarry in his hand. Want is an excellent qualification; and "no money, no price," to you, (who, I know, dare not glory in your own righteousness,) is fitness warrantable enough to cast yourself upon Him who justifieth the ungodly. Some see the gold once, and never again till the race's end; it is coming all in a sum together; when ye are in a more gracious capacity to tell it than now. "Ye are not come to the mount that burneth with fire, or unto blackness, darkness, and tempest; but ye are come to Mount Zion, unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling," etc.

Ye must leave the wife to a more choice Husband, and the children to a better Father.

If ye leave any testimony to the Lord's work and Covenant, against both Malignants, and Sectaries, (which I suppose may be needful,) let it be under your hand, and subscribed before faithful witnesses.

Your loving and afflicted brother, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Sept. 27, 1648.

LETTER CCCXXII.

TO MISTRESS GILLESPIE.

Dear Sister,—I have heard how the Lord hath visited you, in removing the child Archibald. I hope ye see that the setting down of the weight of your confidence and affection upon any created thing, whether husband or child, is a deceiving thing; and that the Creature is not able to bear the weight, but sinketh down to very nothing under your confidence. And, therefore, ye are Christ's debtor for all providences of this kind, even in that he buildeth an hedge of thorns in your way: for so ye see that his gracious intention is to save you, (if I may say so,) whether ye

will or not. It is a rich mercy that the Lord Christ will be Master of your will and of your delights, and that his way is so fair for landing of husband and children beforehand in the country whitherto ye are journeying. No matter how little ye be engaged to the world, since ye have such experience of cross dealing in it. Had ye been a child of the house, the world would have dealt more warmly with its own. There is less of you out of Heaven, in that the child is there, and the husband is there, but much more that your Head, Kinsman, and Redeemer doth fetch home such as are in danger to be lost. And from this time forward, fetch not your comforts from such broken cisterns and dry wells: if the Lord pull at the rest, ye must not be the creature that will hold when he draweth.

Truly, to me your case is more comfortable than if the fire-side were well plenished[1] with ten children. The Lord saw that ye were able, by his grace, to bear the loss of husband and child: and that ye are that[2] weak and tender as not to be able to stand under the mercy of a gracious husband, living and flourishing in esteem with authority, and in reputation for godliness and learning: for he knoweth the weight of these mercies would crush you and break you; and as there is no searching out of his understanding, so he hath skill to know what providence will make Christ dearest to you; and let not your heart say, "It is an ill-waled[3] dispensation." Sure Christ, who hath seven eyes, had before him the good of a living husband and children for Margaret Murray, and the good of a removed husband and children translated to glory; now that he hath opened his decree to you, say, "Christ hath made for me a wise and gracious choice, and I have not one word to say to the contrary." Let not your heart charge anything, nor unbelief libel injuries upon Christ because he will not let you alone, nor give you leave to play the idolatress with such as have not that right to your love that Christ hath. I should wish that, at the reading of this, ye may fall down and make a surrender of those that are gone, and of those that are yet alive, to him: and for you, let him have all; and wait for himself, for he will come, and will not tarry. Live by faith, and the peace of God guard your heart. He cannot die whose ye are.

My wife suffereth with you; and remembereth her love to you.

Your brother, in Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, August 14, 1649.

LETTER CCCXXIII.

TO THE WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED COL. GILBERT KER.

MUCH HONORED, AND TRULY WORTHY,—I hope I shall not need to show you, that ye are in greater hazard from yourself and

[1] Replenished. [2] So. [3] Ill-selected.

your own spirit, which should be watched over,—that your actings for God may be clean, spiritual, purely for God, for the Prince of the kings of the earth,—than ye can be in danger from your enemies. Oh, how hard is it, to get the intentions so cut off from, and raised above the creature, as to be without mixture of creature and carnal interest, and to have the soul in heavenly actings, only eying Himself, and acting from love to God, revealed to us in Jesus Christ! Ye will find yourself, your delights, your solid glory, (far above the air and breathings of mouths, and the thin, short, poor applauses of men,) before you in God. All the creatures, all the swords, all the hosts in Britain, and in this poor globe of the habitable world, are but under him single cyphers making no number of the product being nothing but painted men, and painted swords in a brod,[1] without influence from him. And, oh, what of God is in Gideon's sword, when it is the sword of the Lord!

I wish a sword from Heaven to you, and orders from Heaven to you to go out, and as much peremptoriness of a heavenly will, as to say, and abide by it, "I will not, I shall not go out unless thou goest with me." I desire not to be rash in judging; but I am a stranger to the mind of Christ, if our adversaries who have unjustly invaded us, be not now in the camp of those that make war with the Lamb. But the Lamb shall overcome them at length; for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings, and they who are with him are called, and chosen and faithful. And though ye and I see but the dark side of God's dispensations this day towards Britain, yet the fair, beautiful, and desirable close of it must be the confederacy of the nations of the world with Britain's Lord of armies. And let me die in the comforts of the faith of this, that a throne shall be set up for Christ in this island of Britain, (which is, and shall be, a garden more fruitful of trees of righteousness, and which payeth, and shall pay more thousands to the Lord of the vineyard, than is paid in thrice the bounds of Great Britain upon earth,) and then there can be neither papist, prelate, malignant, nor sectary, who dare draw a sword against Him that sitteth upon the throne.

Sir, I shall wish a clean army, so far as may be, that the shout of a King who hath many crowns, may be among you; and that ye may fight in faith, and prevail with God first. Think it your glory to have a sword to act, and suffer, and die, (if it please him,) so being ye may add anything to the declarative glory of Christ, the Plant of renown, Immanuel, God with us: happy and thrice blessed are they by whose actings, or blood, or pain, or loss, the diadems and rubies of his highest and most glorious crown, (whose ye are,) shall glister and shine in this quarter of the habitable world. Though he need not Gilbert Ker, nor his sword; yet this honor have ye with his redeemed soldiers, to call Christ High Lord-General, of whom ye hope for pay, and all arrears well told. Go on, worthy sir, in the courage of faith, follow-in the Lamb; make

[1] Board.

not haste unbelievingly; but in hope and silence keep the watch-tower, and look out. He will come in his own time; his salvation shall not tarry, he will place salvation in Britain's Zion for Israel's glory.

His good-will who dwelt in the bush, and it burned not, be yours, and with you.

I am yours, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Aug. 10, 1650.

LETTER CCCXXIV.

TO THE WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED COL. GILBERT KER.

MUCH HONORED, AND WORTHY SIR,—What I wrote to you before, I spake not upon any private warrant. I am where I was. Cromwell and his army, (I shall not say, but there may be, and are, several sober and godly among them, who have either joined through misinformation, or have gone alongst with the rest in the simplicity of their hearts, not knowing anything,) fight in an unjust cause, against the Lord's secret ones; and now, to the trampling of the worship of God, and persecuting the people of God in England and Ireland, he hath brought upon his score the blood of the people of God in Scotland. I entreat you, dear sir, as ye desire to be serviceable to Jesus Christ, whose free grace prevented you, when ye were his enemy, go on without fainting, equally eschewing all mixtures with Sectaries[1] and Malignants;[2] neither of the two shall ever be instrumental to save the Lord's people, or build his house. And, without prophesying, or speaking further than He whose I am, and whom I desire to serve in the Gospel of his Son, shall warrant, I desire to hope and to believe there is a glory and a majesty of the Prince of the kings of the earth, that shall shine and appear in Great Britain, which shall darken all the glory of men, confound Sectaries and Malignants, and rejoice the spirits of the followers of the Lamb, and dazzle the eyes of the beholders.

Sir, I suppose that God is to gather Malignants and Sectaries, ere all be done, as sheaves in a barn-floor; and to bid the Daughter of Zion arise, and thresh. I hope that ye will mix with none of them. I am abundantly satisfied, that our army, through the sinful miscarriage of men, hath fallen; and dare say, it is a better and a more comfortable dispensation than if the Lord had given us the victory and the necks of the reproachers of the way of God, because he hath done it. For—1. More blood, blasphemies, cruelty, treachery, must be upon the accounts of the men, whose land the Lord forbid us to invade. 2. Victory is such a burdening and weighty mercy, that we have not strength to bear it as yet. 3. That was not the army, nor Gideon's three hundred, by

[1] Independents. [2] Chevaliers.

whom he is to save us;—we must have one of our Lord's carving. 4. Our enemies, on both sides, are not enough hardened, nor we enough mortified to multitude, valor and creatures.

Grace, grace be with you.

Your friend and servant,

In his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Sept. 5, 1650.

LETTER CCCXXV.

A Letter from Mr. Samuel Rutherford *to* Mr. William Guthrie, *when the army was at Stirling, after the defeat at Dunbar,*[1] *and the godly in the West were falsely branded with intended compliance with the usurpers, about the time when those debates and that difference concerning the Public Resolutions, arose.*

Reverend Brother,—I did not dream of such shortness of breath, and fainting in the way toward our country: I thought that I had no more to do than die in my nest, and bow down my sinful head, and let Him put on the crown, and so end. I have suffered much; but that is the thickest darkness, and the straitest step of the way I have yet trodden. I see more suffering yet behind, and I fear from the keepers of the vine. Let me obtain of you, that you would press upon the Lord's people, that they would stand far off from these merchants of souls, come in amongst you. If the way revealed in the word be that way, we then know that these soul-cowpers[2] and traffickers show not the way of salvation. Alas! alas! poor I am utterly lost, my share of Heaven is gone, and my hope is perished, and I am cut off from the Lord, if hitherto out of the way. But I dare not judge kind Christ; for, if it may be but permitted, (with reverence to his greatness and highness, be it spoken,) I will, before witnesses, produce his own hand, that he said, "This is the way, walk thou in it,"—and he cannot except against his own seal. I profess that I am almost broken and a little sleepy, and would fain put off this body: but this is my infirmity, who would be under the shadow and covert of that Good Land, once to be without the reach and blast of the terrible One. But I am a fool: there is none that can overbid, or take my lodging over my head, since Christ hath taken it for me.

Dear brother, help me, and get me the help of their prayers who are with you, in whom is my delight. You are much suspected of intended compliance; I mean not of you, only, but of all the people of God with you. It is but a poor thing, the fulfilling of my joy; but let me obtest all the serious seekers of his face, his secret sealed ones, by the strongest consolations of the

[1] On September 3rd, 1650.

[2] Soul-jobbers.

Spirit, by the gentleness of Jesus Christ, that Plant of renown, by your last accounts, and appearing before God, when the white throne shall be set up, be not deceived with their fair words. Though my spirit be astonished at the cunning distinctions, which are found out in the matters of the Covenant, that help may be had against these men; yet my heart trembleth to entertain the least thought of joining with those deceivers.

Grace, grace be with you. Amen.

Your own brother, in our common Lord and Saviour, S. R.

St. Andrew's.

LETTER CCCXXVI.

TO THE WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED COL. GILBERT KER.

MUCH HONORED, AND WORTHY SIR,—It is worthy of consideration, that the Lord may, and often doth call to a work, and yet hide himself, and try the faith of his own. If I conceive aright, the Lord hath called you to act against that enemy; and the withdrawers of their sword, in my weak apprehension, add their zeal unto, and take upon them the guilt of that unjust invasion of this land made by Cromwell's army, and of the blood of the Lord's people in this kingdom; since the sword, put into the hand of his children, is to execute wrath and vengeance upon evil-doers. The Lord's time of appearing for his broken land is reserved to the breathings of the Spirit of the Lord, such as came upon Gibeon and Samson; and that is an act of princely and royal sovereignty in God. Ye are, sir, to lay hold on opportunities of Providence, and to wait for him.

As for your particular treating by yourselves with the invaders of our land, I have no mind to it, and do look upon their way as a carrying on of the Mystery of Iniquity, (for Babylon is a seat of many names.) Sir, let this controversy stand undecided till the Second Appearance of Jesus Christ, and our appeal lie before the throne undiscussed till that day. I hope to lie down in the grave in the faith of the justness of our cause. I speak nothing of the maintaining the greatness of men, not subordinate to the Prince of the kings of the earth. I judge that the blood of the witnesses of Jesus is found upon the skirts of this society, as well as in Babylon's skirts. I believe that the way of the Lord is Colonel Gilbert Ker's strength and glory; and I should be content to want my part of him, (which is, I confess, precious and dear in Christ,) so that he be spent in the service of Him who will anon make inquisition for the blood of the truly godly, which these men have shed, after fair warning that they were the godly of Scotland.

Worthy sir, believe, faint not, set your shoulder under the glory of Jesus, that is misprised in Scotland, and give a testimony

for him—he hath many names in Scotland, who shall walk with him in white. This despised Covenant shall ruin Malignants, Sectaries, and Atheists. Yet a little while, and behold he cometh, and walketh in the greatness of his strength, and his garments dyed with blood. Oh, for the sad and terrible day of the Lord upon England, their ships of Tarshish, their fenced cities, etc., because of a broken Covenant!

A conference with the enemy, not to hinder acting, (Oh, that the Lord would thereby, or by some other way, remove the cloud that is over you,) if authority should concur, were to be desired; but it can hardly be expected: however, in the way of duty, and in the silence of faith, go on; if ye perish, ye are the first of the creation with whom the Lord hath taken that dispensation. I should humbly desire you, sir, to look to that, "Dying, and behold we live; killed all the day long, and yet more than conquerors." There shall be the heat and warmness of life in your graves and buried bones; but look not for the Lord's coming the higher way only, for he may come the lower way. Oh, how little of God do we see, and how mysterious is he! Christ known is amongst the greatest secrets of God. Keep yourself in the love of God, and, in order to that, as far in obedience and subjection to the King, (whose salvation and true happiness my soul desireth,) and to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, and to the fundamental laws of this kingdom, as your Lord requireth. Sir, ye are in the hearts and prayers of the Lord's people in this kingdom, and in the other two. The Lord hath said, "There is a blessing in the cluster of grapes, destroy it not."

Grace, grace be upon the head of him that is separated from his brethren; and the good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush, be with you.

Your servant, in his sweet Lord Jesus, S. R.

Perth, Nov. 23, 1650.

LETTER CCCXXVII.

TO THE MUCH HONORED, AND TRULY WORTHY COLONEL GILBERT KER.

(Habakkuk ii. 3, 4.)

MUCH HONORED, AND WORTHY SIR,—Your chains now shine as much for Christ, the cause being his, as your sword was made famous in acting for that cause; and blessed are such as can willingly tender to Christ both action and blood, doing and suffering. Resisting unto blood is little for that precious and never-enough exalted Redeemer, who, when ye were a-buying, gave blood somewhat dearer than ye gave for him, even the blood of God, (Acts xx. 28.) I know a man, who, upon the receipt of a letter, that ye were killed and the people of God destroyed, wished that he might

be quickly under the wall of the higher palace, from under the dint of the storm, and who longed to have the weather-beaten and crazy bark safely landed in that harbor of eternal quietness.

What further service Christ hath for you, I know not; it is enough, that in your captivity ye offer your service to Christ—but, if I see anything, it looketh like a merciful defeat. I see the nobles and the State falling off from Christ, and the night coming upon the prophets, which we should pray to prevent: because it is a rare thing to see a fallen star win [1] ever up again to the firmament to shine. And what if this be the thick darkness going before the break of day? Sure, sir, the sun shall rise upon Scotland; but if I shall see it, or how near it is to that day, I leave that to Him, even unto Jehovah, who "createth upon every dwelling-place in Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies a cloud, and a smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night." But, sir, "the wilderness shall rejoice and blossom as a rose:" and happy he, who hath a bone or an arm, to put the crown upon the head of our highest King whose chariot is paved with love. Were there ten thousand millions of heavens created above these highest Heavens, and again as many above them, and as many above them till angels were wearied with counting, it were but too low a seat to fix the princely throne of that Lord Jesus, (whose ye are,) above them all:—created heavens are too low a seat of majesty for him. Since then, there is none equal to your Master and Prince who hath chosen out for you amongst many sufferings for sin, that only cross, which cometh nearest in likeness to his own cross, watered [2] with consolation, take courage, and comfort yourself in Him who hath chosen you to glory hereafter, and to conformity with him here. We fools would have a cross of our own choosing, and would have our gall and wormwood sugared, our fire cold, and our death and grave warmed with heat of life; but He who hath brought many children to glory, and lost none, is our best Tutor. I wish that when I am sick, he may be keeper and comforter. I judge it a blessed fall, that we are forfeited heirs, broken and out of credit, and that Christ is become a Tutor in the place of Free-will, and that we are no more our own. I am broken and wasted with the wrath that is on the land, and have been much tempted with a design to have a pass from Christ, which if I had, I would not stay to be a witness of our defection, for no man's entreaty. But I know it is my softness and weakness, who would ever be ashore, when a fit of sea-sickness cometh on; though I know I shall come soon enough to that desirable country, and shall not be displaced,—none shall take my lodging.

Sir, many eyes are upon you, and the godly are exceedingly refreshed, that ye listen not to the ways of many about you, who with fair words make merchandise of souls. Sir, if the way you are in, be not the way of Christ, then woe to me, for I am eternally lost; but truly, the Lord Christ's dealings with Colonel Gilbert Ker hath proven [3] to me, that the New Testament and the Cov-

[1] Get. [2] Plated. [3] Proved.

enant of Grace is a piece, that a solemn meeting and assembly of all created angels, join all their wits together, could not have devised. Since, sir, ye paid nothing for the change that Christ made, and ye will take that debt of free grace to Heaven with you, (for what was Christ Jesus indebted to you, more than to all your kindred and name!) therefore, since ye are made his own, follow no other way. What is my salvation, though I should lay it in pawn, (it is but a poor pledge,) that this, this only is the way? but Christ is surety himself, that it is the way. The Forerunner went before you, and he is safely landed, and there is a fair company before you of such as "have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb;" to whom these promises are now performed, "He that overcometh, shall eat of the Tree of life, that is in the midst of the Paradise of God; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain. He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them; they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat; for the Lamb, that is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall take them unto living fountains of waters."

I may, sir, possibly keep you from better work. The God of peace, that brought again from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the Eternal Covenant, make you perfect.

Yours, in Jesus Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Jan. 7, 1651.

LETTER CCCXXVIII.

TO THE MUCH HONORED, AND TRULY WORTHY COLONEL GILBERT KER.

MUCH HONORED, AND WORTHY SIR,—I have heard of your continued captivity in England, as well as in this afflicted land; but, go where ye will, ye cannot go from under your Shadow, which is broader than many kingdoms. Ye change lodging and countries; but the same Lord is before you; if ye were carried away captive to the other side of the sun, or as far as the rising of the morning star. It is spoken to your Mother, who hath yet received no bill of divorce, which was written to Judah, (Micah iv. 10,) "Be in pain, and labor to bring forth, O Daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon, there shalt thou be delivered: there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies." England shall be accountable for you, to render you back; (Isa. xliii. 6,) "I will say to the north, 'Give up;' and to the south, 'Keep not back.'" It is a sermon that flesh and blood laugheth at; (Ezek. xxxvii. 4,) "Proph-

esy upon these dry bones, and say unto them, 'O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord!'" It is a preaching to the cold grave: "Thus saith the Lord unto the bones, 'Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live.'" (Rev. xx. 13,) "And the sea gave up the dead that were in it." Berwick must render back the Scottish captives, and Colonel Gilbert Ker with them. (Isa. xliii. 14,) "For thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, 'For your sake, I have sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.'" (Deut. xxx. 4,) "If any of them be driven out to the utmost parts of Heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee." (Zech. viii. 7, 8,) "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, 'Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them, and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God, in truth and in righteousness.'" Sir, ye are both booked by the Lord who writeth up the people, (Psal. lxxxvii. 5, 6,) and counted to the Lord as one of the house and stock, (Psal. xxii. 30.) Fear not, faint not, all your hairs are numbered.

It is the desire of the people of God, that as your bonds hitherto have been exemplary, to the strengthening of the feeble, and to the stopping of the mouth of the adversary, without any declining to the right or left hand; so your sufferings, in the place ye now go to, may be, (as we are confident in the Lord of you, and in humility boast of his grace in you,) savory, convincing, and like unto this honorable cause, that will prevail in Britain, contrary to all the machinations and counsels of devils and men: and though there were no other ink in the pen I now write with, but some dewing of my last cooling blood, this I purpose, (His grace whose I am, enabling me,) to stand to. Sir, we desire to adore no instruments; yet we conceive the shining and rays of grace, from the Fountain, Jesus Christ the fulness of the Godhead, bestowed on sinful men, hold forth the good thoughts of Christ to this poor land, whose multiplied graves, and whose souls under the altar, slain by Sectaries and Malignants, cry aloud to Heaven.

I see nothing, sir, if the Lord be not near, though I dare not say how soon, to awake for the year of Zion's controversy; (Isa. xxxiv. 5,) "For my sword shall be bathed in Heaven." Behold, it shall come down upon England, and on the residue of his enemies in Scotland. Woe is me for England! That land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness; that pleasant land shall be a wilderness, and on the dust of their land pitch; a judgment upon their walled towns, their pleasant fields, their strong ships, etc., if they do not repent.

Ye have not, I conceive, seen such searching and trying times as now these are; and yet the question will be drawn to a more narrow state, and multitudes will yet leave the Cause; for we

took all into the covenant that offered to build with us; but Christ must have but a small remnant; few nobles, if any, few ministers, few professors, though our way standeth unchanged, (2 Cor. vi. 8, 9,) "By honor and dishonor, by good report and evil report: as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and yet not killed." Neither is this your condition alone, but the experienced lot of all the saints that have gone before you. It is one and the same cross of Christ; but there be sundry faces and diverse circumstances in the same remnant, the sufferings of Christ and yours. Sir, to be delivered to soldiers, and in captivity, looketh like His suffering of whom Isaiah saith, (chap. liii. 8,) "He was taken from prison, and from judgment;" yea, and taken bound, (John xviii. 12.) When the cause is the truth of God, the lustre and face of suffering is so much the more lovely, that it hath the hue and color of Christ's sufferings who endured contradiction of sinners, and despised the shame. Oh it is a great word, "Christ shamed, and Christ abased!" But thus was the Head, and so are the members dealt with in the world: and truly anything of Christ, even the worst of him, (to speak so,) his reproach and shame, are lovely. Though superstitious love to the material cross he suffered upon be foolery, and doting upon the holy grave be cursed idolatry: yet is there a communion with him in his sufferings most desirable; (1 Pet. iv. 13,) "But rejoice, in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings:" in which sense the cup that his lip touched hath the sweeter taste, even though death were in it; the grave, because he did lie in it, is so much the softer, and the more refreshful[1] a bed of rest; and that part of the sky and clouds that the Beloved shall break through, and come to judgment, is as lovely a piece of the created heaven as any is, if we may love the ground he goeth on the better—but all this is to be understood in a spiritual manner.

The Lord calleth you, sir, upon whom the Spirit of God and his glory resteth, to put your soul's AMEN to this dispensation; and requireth of us, that our desires follow the now-declared decree of God, concerning the desolation of our sinful land, so many ways guilty of a despised Gospel, and a broken Covenant, and that with all submission. Certainly no man hath failed more in this thing, than he who writeth to you; for I have brought my health into great hazard, and tormented my spirit with excessive grief, for our present provocations, and the rendings of our kirk; and I see it is a challenging[2] of, and a bold pleading against him upon whose shoulder the government is, (Isa. xxii. 22.) The Father hath put a glorious trust upon Christ; (ver. 23,) "And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place, and he shall be for a glorious throne to his Father's house. (ver. 24,) "And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels of small quantity; from the vessels of cups even to all the vessels of flagons." Our unbelieving apprehensions do so quarrel at the

[1] Refreshing. [2] Accusing.

prosperity of enemies in an evil cause, that we wrestle with defeats, spoiling, captivity of the godly, killing of his people, the wasting of our land, starving and famishing of the kingdom, which is worse than the sword; but this is a sinful contradicting of the Lord's revealed decree. His wisdom saith, "Spoiling and desolation is best for Scotland," and we say, "Not;" and so accuse Christ of misgovernment, and of not being true to the trust put upon him. But since he doth not drag the government at his heels, but hath it upon his shoulder; and since the Nail fastened in a sure place cannot be broken, nor can the smallest vessel fail to find sweet security in dependence upon him; since all the weight of Heaven and earth, of redeemed saints and confirmed angels is upon his shoulder, I am a fool, and brutish to imagine, that I can add anything to Christ's special care of, and tenderness to his people. He who keepeth the basins and knives of his house, and bringeth the vessels again to the Second Temple, (Ezra i. 8, 9, 10,) must have a more tender care of his redeemed ones, than of a spoon, or of Peter's old shoes, which yet must not be lost in his captivity, (Acts xii. 8.) Oh, for grace to suffer Christ to tutor his own minors and young heirs! But we cannot endure to be under the actings of his government; we love too much to be our own. Oh, how sweet to be wholly Christ's, and wholly in Christ! to be out of the creature's owning, and made complete in Christ; to live by faith in Christ; and to be once for all clothed with the created majesty and glory of the Son of God, wherein he maketh all his friends and followers sharers; to dwell in Immanuel's high and blessed land, and live in that sweetest air, where no wind bloweth, but the breathings of the Holy Ghost; no seas nor floods flow, but the pure waters of life, that proceedeth from under the throne, and from the Lamb; no planting, but the Tree of life, that yieldeth twelve manner of fruits every month! What do we here but sin and suffer? Oh, when shall the nights be gone, the shadows flee away, and the morning of that long, long day, without cloud or night, dawn! The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." Oh, when shall the Lamb's wife be ready, and the Bridegroom say, "Come!"

Worthy sir, I mind you to the Hearer of prayer; Oh, help me in that kind!

The Spirit of Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, in his only, only Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, May 14, 1651.

LETTER CCCXXIX.

TO THE WORTHY, AND MUCH HONORED COL. GILBERT KER.

MUCH HONORED, AND WORTHY SIR,—I know not why the people of God should not take notice of the bonds of any who have blood in readiness to be let out for his cause; and I judge it was

not you, that ye died not in the undecided controversy which the Lord of the whole earth hath with the men whom he hath sent against us.

Dear, and much honored in the Lord, let me entreat you to be far from the thoughts of leaving this land,—I see it, and find[1] it, that the Lord hath covered the whole land with a cloud in his anger: but though I have been tempted to the like, I had rather be in Scotland, beside angry Jesus Christ, knowing that he mindeth no evil to us, than in any Eden or garden in the earth,—if we can remain united with the Lord's remnant in the land. He layeth up wrath for all sorts of adversaries in Britain. Though I should never see the glory of his glistering sword in Britain, I would be solaced in the innocent thoughts, (far from revenge,) that the saints shall dip their feet in the blood of the slain of the Lord. And truly, sir, I suppose that ye cannot but come to these thoughts and weak desires before the Hearer of prayers, for as little as ye think of and value yourself. For me, if I could mind you in your bonds, I purpose not to stand to the account ye give, or thoughts ye have of yourself; though I knew ye are not a whit more or less before Him who weigheth his own according to the weight of imputed righteousness, for my apprehensions. Christ cannot mistake you,—men may—and the calculation and esteem of free grace maketh you to be what you are. I hope to see you an everlastingly obliged debtor to Him whom ye shall praise, but never pay. And truly ye have no riches but that debt; and I know that ye love to be engaged to Jesus Christ, the most excellent of creditors: much joy and sweetness may ye have in standing written in his book. I desire to do it myself, and I would have you also highly to esteem the design of Christ, who hath raised the riches of the glory of so much grace above the circle of the Heaven of heavens, out of very nothings: and contrived his thoughts of love so, that lumps of glorified clay should stand before him, for all ages, the burdens and loaden debtors of free, eternally free grace. Sir, ye cannot cast the count of the rents of your so great inheritance of glory. Grace be with you.

Your servant, in his own Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh, May 18, 1651.

LETTER CCCXXX.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—We are fallen in winnowing and trying times. I am glad that your breath serveth you to run to the end, in the same condition and way wherein ye have walked these twenty years past: it is either the way of peace, or we are yet in our sins, and have missed the way. The Lord,

[1] Feel.

it is true, hath stained the pride of all our glory; and now, last of all, the sun hath gone down upon many of the prophets: but stumble not, men are but men, and God appeareth more and more to be God, and Christ is still Christ.

Madam, a stronger than I am, had almost stumbled me and cast me down; but, oh, what mercy is it, to discern between what is Christ's and what is man's, and what way the hue, color, and lustre of gifts of grace dazzle and deceive our weak eyes! Oh, to be dead to all things that are below Christ, were it even a created heaven and created grace! Holiness is not Christ; nor are the blossoms and flowers of the Tree of life the tree itself. Men and creatures may wind themselves between us and Christ; and, therefore, the Lord hath done much to take out of the way all betwixt him and us. There are not in our way now kings, nor armies, nor nobles, nor judicatories, nor strongholds, nor watchmen, nor godly professors. The fairest things, and most eminent in Britain, are stained, and have lost their lustre; only, only Christ keepeth his greenness and beauty, and remaineth what he was. Oh! if he were more and more excellent to our apprehensions than ever he was, (whose excellency is above all apprehensions,) and still more and more sweet to our taste. I care for nothing, if so be that I were nearer to him; and yet he fleeth not from me; I flee from him, but he pursueth. I hear that your Ladyship hath the same esteem of the despised Cause and Covenant of our Lord, that ye had before. Madam, hold you there. I dare and would gladly breathe out my spirit in that way, with a nearer communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son, and would seek no more, but that I might die believing: and also I would hope, that the earth should not cover the blood of the godly slain in Scotland; but that the Lord will make inquisition for their blood, when the sufferings of the saints in these lands shall be fulfilled.

Tho good-will of Him that dwelt in the bush be with you.

Your Ladyship's,

At all observance, in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

Glasgow, Sept. 28, 1651.

LETTER CCCXXXI.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, AND CHRISTIAN LADY, THE LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—The Lord is gracious who keepeth your Ladyship in the furnace, when many put out their hand to iniquity one way or other. We are now shouldering and casting down one another in the dark, and the godly are hidden from the godly. We make our own chains heavier by joining with the Lord's enemies; hence new sufferings to all that dare not say a confederacy to those to whom this people

say a confederacy, nor fear their fear. As that is my exercise now, who am not very far from being my lone,[1]—though I know in Whom I have believed, at least, I should know,—in this place; so I am afraid that the godly there comply with those declared enemies of God. It will be our strength to walk between enemies and Malignants on either side. This is the day of Jacob's trouble, yet these dry bones can, and must live. I know not if I shall see it, but I hope to take this quietness and silence of faith, in the midst of the noises of the alarm for war, to the grave with me, that the Lord will build upon the Church of Britain and Ireland a palace of silver, inclosed with boards of cedar.

Dear madam, faint not, the night is almost gone; for the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, and not tarry. Madam, weary not; none can outbid your lodging in Heaven; there is more given for it by Him who hath bespoken it for Jean Campbell, and taken it for her, than any can offer:—the ransom of blood standeth.

My wife remembereth her respects to your Ladyship. The child is well. Mrs. Gillespie is well, we hear, but is not here.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in his own Lord Jesus Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Jan. 28, 1653.

LETTER CCCXXXII.

FOR GRIZZEL FULLERTON.

Mistress,—Remembering well what relation I had to your dear mother, (now blessed and perfected with glory,) and being confident that yourself looketh that way, which, except I be eternally lost, is the way of peace and of life; I should be ungrateful to forget those, whom, by the covenant of the Lord, I cannot but remember to God.

I shall speak nothing to you of the present sad differences; but if I have, or ever had, any nearness to God, that other way, which I trust I shall never follow, is the way of man. And, for the present powers, I suffer from them, and look for more. God hath a controversy with them; and, my soul, enter not into their secrets. Only, I would beseech, request, and obtest you, in the Lord, and by your appearance before Christ, to follow the way of the Lord, and the steps trod by the gracious in that place, which the Lord followed with life and power. My heart is filled with sorrow, considering what communion with God some of that country had, and how much they were in edifying and helping one another in his way, and how little of that there is now in that country. Your mother kept-in[2] life in that place, and quickened

[1] By myself alone.

[2] Preserved.

many about her to the seeking of God. My desire to you is, that ye should succeed her in that way, and be letting a word fall to your brethren and others, that may encourage them to look toward the way of God:—you will have need of it ere it be long. See how you may have a gracious minister, and no neutral there, to succeed and follow the servant of God, now asleep in the Lord. There is a great and wide difference between a name of godliness, and the power of godliness: that is hottest when there are fewest witnesses. The deadness upon many, and the defection of the land, is great. Blessed are they who seek the Lord and his face.

I shall entreat you to remember me to your husband, and all friends. I desire to forget none who are in Christ.

Your brother, in the Lord, S. R.

Edinburgh, March 14, 1653.

LETTER CCCXXXIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—Grace, mercy, and peace be to you.—I know that ye think of an out-going, and that your quartering in time, and your abode in this life, is short; "for we flee away as a shadow." The declining of the sun, and the lengthening of the shadow, say that our journey is short and near the end. I speak it, because I have warnings of my removal. Madam, I know not any against whom the Lord is not: for he is against "the proud and lofty; the day of the Lord is upon all the cedars, upon all the high mountains, upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall, upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures." I know not anything comparable to a nearness and spiritual communion with the Father and the Son Christ. There is much deadness and witheredness upon many spirits, sometimes near to God; and I wish the Lord have not more to say and to do against the land.

Ye have, madam, in your accounts, mercies, deliverances, rods, warnings, plenty of means, consolations when refuge failed, when ye looked on the right hand and behold no man would know you nor care for your soul, when young and weak manifestations of God, the out-goings of the Lord for you, experiences, answers from the Lord; by all which, ye may be comforted now, and confirmed in the certain hope, that grace, free grace, in a fixed and established surety, shall perfect that good work in you. Happy they who see not and yet believe.

Grace, grace eternally in our Lord Jesus be with you.

Yours, in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

Edinburgh, May 27, 1653.

LETTER CCCXXXIV.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, AND TRULY WORTHY GILBERT KER.

MUCH HONORED IN THE LORD,—How it is with you, may appear by your letters to some with us: but it is the complaint of not a few of such, as were in Christ before me, that most of us inhabit and dwell in a parched land. The people of the Lord are like a land not rained upon. Though some dare not deny that this is the garden of the Beloved, and the vineyard that the Lord doth keep, and water every moment; yet, oh, where are the sometimes[1] quickening breathings and influences from Heaven, that have refreshed his hidden ones? The causes of his withdrawings are unknown to us. One thing cannot be denied, but that ways of high sovereignty, and dominion of grace, are far out of the sight of angels and men; yea, and so above the fixed way of free promises, such as, "This do, and he shall breathe and blow upon his garden;" as he hath put forth a declaration to his hidden ones in Scotland, that smarting, wrestlings, prayings, complaining, gracious missing, cannot earn the visits from on high, nor fetch down showers upon the desert. It may be, when we are saying in our graves, "Our bones are dry, and our hope gone," that temporal and spiritual deliverance may come both together; and that he will cause us feel, both the one way and the other, the good of His reign who shortly cometh to the throne; (Psal. lxxii. 6,) "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth." (Ver. 7,) "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth." (Ver. 12,) "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, and the poor also, and him that hath no helper." (Ver. 14,) "He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence; and precious shall their blood be in his sight." And though we cannot pray home a sweet season that way, yet Christ must bring summer with him when he cometh. (Ver. 16,) "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." I know not if I apply prophecies as I would, rather than as they are. When the one Shepherd is set over them, even He who shall stand,—Oh, how much do we lie,—and feed in the strength of the Lord, the isles,—and this the greatest of them, —which wait for his law, are to look for that, (Ezek. xxxiv. 26,) "And I will make them, and the places round about my hill, a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season: there shall be showers of blessing." How desirable must every drop of such a shower be! And, (Hos. xiv. 5,) "I will be as the dew to Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." (Ver. 6,) "His branches shall spread, and his beauty

[1] Former, occasional.

shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon." And, (Isaiah lv. 13,) "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Isaiah xli. 19,) "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah-tree, and the oil-tree." (Isaiah xliv. 3,) "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." And it shall be no lost labor, nor fruitless husbandry; (ver. 4,) "they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses." But, when this shall be in Scotland,—and it must be,—is better to believe than prophesy; and quietly to hope and sit still,—for that is yet our strength,—than to quarrel with him, that the wheels of this chariot move leisurely.

Yet this can hardly say anything to us who do so much please ourselves in our deadness, and are almost gone from godly thirst and missing too, being half-satisfied with our witheredness. No doubt we have marred his influences, and have not seconded nor smiled upon his actings upon us, nor have we been much of his strain who, (Psalm cxix.,) doth eight times breathe out that suit, "Quicken me, quicken me." So much are we desirous to be acted upon by the Lord as blocks and stones; and so prodigal are we of his motions, as if they were no better to be husbanded: but it is good, that it is not in our power to blast and undo his breathings; but his wind bloweth where he listeth. Could we but learn and cast a quiet spirit under the dewings and showerings of Him that every moment watereth his vineyard, how happy and blessed were we! We neither open, nor do we discern his knocking, nor feel his hand put in through the keyhole, nor can we give any spiritual account of the walkings and motions of Christ, when he standeth behind the wall, when he cometh skipping over the mountains, when he cometh to his garden and feasteth, when he feedeth among the lilies, when his spikenard casteth a smell, when he knocketh and withdraweth, and is nowhere to be found. Oh, how little a portion of God do we see! How little study we God! how rarely read we God, or are versed in the lively apprehensions of that great unknown All in All, the glorious Godhead, and the Godhead revealed in Christ! We dwell far from the well, and complain but dryly of our dryness and dulness: we are rather dry than thirsty.

Sir, there may be artificial pride in this humility; but for me, I neither know what He is, nor his Son's name, nor where he dwelleth. I hear a report of Christ great enough, and that is all. Oh! what is nearness to him? what is that, to be "in God," to "dwell in God?" What a house must that be! (1 John iv. 13.) How far are some from their house and home? how ill acquaint[1] with the rooms, mansions, safety, and sweetness of holy security to be found in God! Oh, what estrangement! what wandering! what frequent conversing with self and the creature! "Is not

[1] Acquainted.

here the bed shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it? and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it?" (Isaiah xxviii. 20.) When shall we attain to a living in only, only God! and be estranged from all the poor created nothings, the painted shadow-beings of yesterday; which, an hour and less before creation, were dark waste negatives, and empty nothings, and should so have been for eternity, had the Lord suffered them to lie there forever? It is He,[1] the great "He who sitteth upon the circle of the earth," (of the world,) "and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the Heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing, and maketh the judges of the earth as vanity." (Isaiah xl. 22, 23.) And He, the only He, and there is no He beside him. (Isaiah xliii. 10, 11, and xlv. 5.) Men or angels!—they are not any of them a he to him: but a living, breathing, dying nothing is man at his best, a sick clay-vanity; and the angel to him but a more excellent, living, and understanding nothing. Yet we live at a distance from him, and we die and wither, when we are out of God. Oh, if[2] we knew how nothing we are without him.

Sir, we desire to mind your bonds; and are cheered and refreshed, that we hear of any of his manifestations, and his outgoings, which are prepared as the morning to you. We hope, nor need we desire you not to faint, and are confident that the anointing that abideth in you, teacheth you so much. Wait upon the speaking vision: "behold he cometh, behold his reward is with him, and his work before him."

The only wise God strengthen you with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.

Yours at all observance, in the Lord Jesus, S. R.

St. Andrew's, July, 1653.

LETTER CCCXXXV.

FOR MR. JOHN SCOTT, AT OXNAM.

Reverend, and dear Brother,—No man oweth more to the church of God with you, than poor and wretched I: but when weakness of body, and the Lord by it, did forbid to undertake a lesser journey to Edinburgh, I am forbidden far more to journey thither; and believe it, nothing besides this doth hinder. I am unable to overtake what the Lord hath laid upon me here; and, therefore, I desire to submit to sovereignty, and must be silent. If my prayers and best desires to the Lord could contribute anything for promoting of his work, my soul's desire is, that the wilderness, and that place to which I owe my first breathing, in which I fear

[1] *He* is often used, in the Scottish dialect, as הוּא in Hebrew, as a name of God.
[2] That.

Christ was scarce named as touching any reality or power of godliness, may blossom as a rose.

So desiring and praying that his name may be great among you; and entreating that you may believe that the names of the Lord's adversaries shall be written in the earth, and that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain; and that the Lord will create glory upon every assembly in Mount Zion; I rest

Your own brother, in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's, June 15, 1655.

LETTER CCCXXXVI.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I have been so long silent, that I am almost ashamed now to speak. I hear of your weakly condition of body, which speaketh some warning to you, to look for a longer life, where ye shall have more leisure to praise than time can give you here. It shall be loss to many: but sure, yourself, madam, shall be only[1] free of any loss. And truly, considering what days we are now fallen into, if sailing were not serving of the Lord, (which I can hardly attain to,) a calm harbor were very good, when storms are so high. The Forerunner, who hath landed first, must help to bring the sea-beaten vessel safe to the port, and the sick passengers who are following the Forerunner, safe ashore. Much deadness prevaileth over some; but there is much life in Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, to quicken. Oh, what of our hid life is without us, and how little and poor a stock is in the hand of some! Tho only wise God supply what is wanting. The more ye want, and the more your joy hath run on, the more is owing to you by the promise of grace. Bygones[2] of waterings from Heaven, which your Ladyship wanted in Kenmure, Rusco, the West, Glasgow, Edinburgh, England, etc., shall all come in a great sum together:—the marriage-supper of the Lamb must not be marred with too large a four-hours'[3] refreshment. Know, madam, that He who hath tutored you from the breasts, knoweth how to time his own day-shinings, and love-visits.

Grace, that runneth on, be with you.

Yours, in the Lord, at all observance, S. R.

St. Andrew's.

[1] Altogether. [2] By-passed instances. [3] Slight afternoon's.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I confess that I have cause to be grieved at my long silence, or laziness in writing. I am also afflicted to hear, that such who were debtors to your Ladyship for better dealing, have served you with such prevarication. Ye know that crookedness is neither strong nor long enduring; and ye know likewise, that these things spring not out of the dust. It is sweet to look upon the lawless and sinful stirrings of the creatures, as ordered by a most holy Hand in Heaven. Oh, if[1] some could make peace with God! It would be our wisdom, and afford us much sweet peace, if oppressors were looked upon as passive instruments, like the saw or axe in the carpenter's hand: they are bidden, (if such a distinction may be admitted,) but not commanded of God, (as Shimei was, 2 Sam. xvi. 10,) to do what they do.

Madam, these many years the Lord hath been teaching you to read and study well the book of holy, holy and spotless sovereignty, in suffering from some nigh-hand,[2] and some far off. Whoever be the instruments, the replying of clay to the Potter, the Former of all, is unbeseeming the nothing-creature: I hope that he will clear you: but, when Zion's public evils lie not nigh some of us, and leave no impression upon our hearts, it is no wonder that we be exercised with domestic troubles:—but I know that ye are taught of God to prefer Jerusalem to your chiefest joy. Madam, there is no cause of fainting: wait upon the not-tarrying vision, for it will speak.

The only wise God be with you, and God, even your own God, bless you.

Yours, at all observance in God, S. R.

St. Andrew's, June, 1657.

LETTER CCCXXXVIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I should not forget you; but my deadness under a threatening stroke, both of a falling Church, a broken Covenant, a despised Remnant, and craziness of body, that I cannot get a piece sickly clay carried about from one house or town to another, lieth most heavy on me. The Lord hath removed Scotland's crown, for we owned not his crown. We fretted at his catholic government of the world, and fretted that he would not be ruled and led by us, in breaking our adversaries: and he maketh us to suffer

[1] Oh, that.

[2] Near at hand.

and pine away in our iniquities, under the broken government of his house. It is like that it would be our snare, to be tried with the honor of a peaceable reformation; we might mar the carved work of his house, worse than those against whom we cry out. It is like that he hath bidden us lie on our left-side three hundred and ninety days;[1] and yet, so astonishing is our stupidity, that we moan not our sore side. Our gold is become dim, the visage of our Nazarites is become black, the sun is gone down on our seers, the crown is fallen from our head, we roar like bears. Lord save us from that, "He that made them will not have mercy on them." The heart of the scribe meditateth terror. Oh, madam, if[2] the Lord would help us to more self-judging, and to make sure an interest in Christ! Ah, we forget eternity, and it approacheth quickly.

Grace be with you.

Your Ladyship's, at all obedience in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Nov. 20, 1657.

LETTER CCCXXXIX.

FOR MR. JOHN SCOTT, AT OXNAM.

REVEREND, AND DEAR BROTHER,—I saw from C. K. a testimony of your presbytery against toleration, in which ye have been instrumental: the Lord give strength to do more. I think it both rare and necessary, and would account it a great mercy, if there were an addition of a postscript from divers ministers and elders, out of all the shires of Scotland: it is really the mind of all the godly and tender in this land. It is believed by some, that the protesting party hath quite given over the cause. I hope it is not so; but the Lord shall be yet victorious in his most despised ones. Our darkness is great and thick, and there is much deadness; yet the Lord will be our light.

Thus recommending you to His grace whose ye are, I am,

Your own brother, in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's, April 2, 1658.

LETTER CCCXL.

FOR MR. JOHN SCOTT, AT OXNAM.

DEAR BROTHER,—Faint not; but be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. I look on it as a rich mercy, that the Lord is with you, strengthening you to quicken fainters, to warm and warn any that are cold or dead, or who deaden others; believe that it will be your peace in the end. The times are sad; yet I persuade myself that the vision will not tarry, but will speak.

[1] Ezek. iv. [2] That.

The Lord will loose our captive-bonds. Oh, blessed he, though alone, who is found fast and constant for the desirable interest of Christ.

My humble advice would be, that you see to the placing of the deacon and the ruling elder, or to anything that may weaken the discipline. Our Second Book of Discipline should be needed; sessions purged. Oh! catechizing and personal visiting, and speaking to them *sigillatim*[1] concerning their interest in Christ, and a state of conversion, is little in practice. The practice of family fasts is scarce known to be an ordinance of God. It were good that ye should confer with godly brethren in private, concerning the promoting of godliness, concerning Christian conference, and praying together, worshipping of God in families, and solitary fasts.

To His grace who can direct, quicken, and strengthen you, I commend you, and am

Your loving brother, S. R.

St. Andrew's.

LETTER CCCXLI.

TO MR. JAMES DURHAM, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT GLASGOW, SOME FEW DAYS BEFORE HIS DEATH.

Sir,—I would ere now have written to you, had I not known that your health, weaker and weaker, could scarce permit you to hear or read. I need not speak much; the way ye know, and have preached to others the skill of the Guide, and the glory of the home beyond death. And when he saith, "Come and see," it will be your gain to obey, and go out and meet the Bridegroom. What accession is made to the higher house of his Kingdom should not be our loss, though it be real loss to the Church of God: but we count one way, and the Lord counteth another way. He is infallible and the only wise God, and needeth none of us. Had he needed the staying in the body of Moses and the prophets, he could have taken another way. Who dare bid you cast your thoughts back on wife or children, when he hath said, "Leave them to me, and come up hither?" Or who can persuade you to die or live, as if that were arbitrary to us, and not His alone who hath determined the number of your months? If so it seem good to him, follow your Forerunner and Guide. It is an unknown land to you, who were never there before; but the land is good, and the company before the throne desirable, and He who sitteth on the throne is his lone[2] a sufficient heaven.

Grace, grace be with you.

Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's, June 15, 1658.

[1] Severally, one by one.

[2] By himself alone.

LETTER CCCXLII.

FOR MR. JOHN SCOTT, AT OXNAM.

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,—Your letter that came unto me of August 2d, to be at Edinburgh upon August 2d, was unknown to me by the subscription; but since it was written for so honorable and warrantable a truth of Christ, as a testimony against toleration, if my health would have permitted, and my daily menacing gravel, I should have come to Edinburgh. What, either counsel, countenance, or clearing, ye could have had from the like of me, I cannot say, nor dare I speak much, but with a reserve of the help of his grace. I desire to desire and purpose by strength from above, to own that cause, and to join with you and some in this Church, besides your Presbytery, who will own that cause. Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. This cloud will over;[1] could we live by faith, and wait on a speaking and a seemingly delaying vision, the Lord will not tarry.

Grace be with you. Many are with you, but there is One who is above millions.

Your own brother, S. R.

St. Andrew's, August 8, 1658.

LETTER CCCXLIII.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

MADAM,—I am ashamed of my long silence to your Ladyship. Your tossings and wanderings are known to Him upon whom ye have been cast from the breasts, and who hath been your God of old. The temporal loss of creatures, dear to you there, may be the more easily endured, that the gain of One who only hath immortality groweth.

There is an universal complaint of deadness of spirit on all that know God. He that writeth to you, madam, is as deep in this as any, and is afraid of a strong and hot battle before time be at a close:—but no matter if the Lord crown all with the victorious triumphing of faith. God teacheth us by terrible things in righteousness. We see many things, but we observe nothing. Our drink is sour. Gray hairs are here and there on us. We change many lords and rulers: but the same bondage of soul and body remaineth. We live little by faith, but much by sense, according to the times, and by human policy. The watchmen sleep, and the people perish for lack of knowledge. How can we be enlightened, when we turn our back on the Sun? and, must we not be

[1] Pass over.

withered when we leave the Fountain? It should be my only desire to be a minister, gifted with the white stone, and the new name written on it. I judge it were fit, (now when tall professors, and when many stars fall from Heaven, and God poureth the isle of Great Britain from vessel to vessel, and yet we sit and are settled on our lees,) to consider, (as sometimes I do; but, ah! rarely,) how irrecoverable a woe it is to be under a beguile[1] in the matter of eternity: and what if I, who can have a subscribed testimonial[2] of many who shall stand at the right hand of the Judge, shall miss Christ's approving testimony, and be set upon the left hand among the goats? There is such a beguile,[1] (Matt. vii. 22; xxv. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12; Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27.) And it befalleth many, and what if it befall me who have but too much art to cozen my own soul and others with the flourish of ministerial or country holiness.

Dear Lady, I am afraid of prevailing security. We watch little, (I have relation mainly to myself,) we wrestle little. I am like one travelling in the night who seeth a spirit, and sweateth for fear, and dareth not to tell it to his fellow for fear of increasing his own fear. However, I am sure, when the Master is nigh his coming, it were safe to write over a double and a new copy of our accounts of the sins of nature, childhood, youth, riper years, and old age. What if Christ have another written representation of me than I have of myself?—sure he is right:—and if it contradict my mistaking and sinfully erroneous account of myself, ah! where am I then? But, madam, I discourage none; I know that Christ hath made a new marriage-contract of love, and sealed it with his blood, and the trembling believer shall not be confounded.

Grace be with you.

Yours, at all obedience, in Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, May 26, 1659.

LETTER CCCXLIV.

TO MY LADY KENMURE.

Madam,—I should be glad that the Lord would be pleased to lengthen out more time to you, that ye might, before your eyes be shut, see more of the work of the right hand of the Lord, in reviving a now swooning and crushed Land and Church. Though I was lately knocking at death's gate, yet could I not get in, but was sent back for a time. It is well if I could yet do any service to Him; but, ah, what deadness lieth upon the spirit!—and deadness breedeth distance from God. Madam, these many years the Lord hath let you see a clear difference betwixt those who serve God and love his name, and those who serve him not. And I judge that ye look upon the way of Christ as the only best way,

[1] Beguilement, delusion. [2] Certificate of character.

and that ye would not exchange Christ for the world's god, or their Mammon, and that ye can give Christ a testimony of Chief among ten thousand. True it is, that many of us have fallen from our first love; but Christ hath renewed his first love of our espousals to himself, and multiplied the seekers of God, all the country over, even where Christ was scarce named, east and west, south and north, above the number that our fathers ever knew. But, ah! madam, what shall be done or said of many fallen stars, and many near to God complying wofully, and sailing to the nearest shore? Yea, and we are consumed in the furnace, but not melted; burned, but not purged; our dross is not removed, but our scum remaineth in us; and in the furnace we fret, we faint, and, (which is more strange,) we slumber. The fire burneth round about us, and we lay it not to heart. Gray hairs are upon us, and we know it not.

It were now a desirable life to send away our love to Heaven; and well it becometh us to wait for our appointed change, yet so as we should be meditating thus:—"Is there a new world above the sun and moon? and is there such a blessed company harping and singing hallelujahs to the Lamb up above? Why, then, are we taken with a vain life of sighing and sinning? Oh, where is our wisdom, that we sit still laughing, eating, sleeping prisoners, and do not pack up all our best things for the journey, desiring always to be clothed with our house from above, not made with hands!" Ah! we savor not the things that are above, nor do we smell of glory ere we come thither; but we transact and agree with time for a new lease of clay-mansions. Behold! He cometh. We sleep, and turn all the work of duties into dispute of events for deliverance; but the greatest haste to be humbled for a broken and a buried Covenant is first and last forgotten: and all our grief is, the Lord lingereth, enemies triumph, godly ones suffer, atheists blaspheme. Ah! we pray not; but wonder that Christ cometh not the higher way, by might, by power, by garments rolled in blood. What if he come the lower way? Sure we sin in putting the book in his hand, as if we could teach the Almighty knowledge. We make haste; we believe not. Let the only wise God alone, he steereth well; he draweth straight lines, though we think and say they are crooked. It is right that some should die and their breasts full of milk; and yet we are angry that God dealeth so with them. Oh, if[1] I could adore him in his hidden ways, when there is darkness under his feet, and darkness in his pavilion, and clouds are about his throne! Madam, hoping, believing, patient praying is our life. He loseth no time.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, at all obliged observance, in Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Sept. 12, 1659.

[1] Oh, that.

LETTER CCCXLV.

TO HIS REVEREND, AND DEAR BRETHREN, MR. GUTHRIE, MR. TRAILL, AND THE REST OF THEIR BRETHREN IMPRISONED IN THE CASTLE OF EDINBURGH.

REVEREND, VERY DEAR, AND NOW MUCH HONORED PRISONERS FOR CHRIST,—I am, as to the point of light, at the utmost of persuasion in that kind, that this is the cause of Christ which ye now suffer for, and not men's interest. If it be for men, let us leave it; but if we plead for God, our own personal safety and man's deliverance will not be peace. There is a salvation called "the salvation of God," which is cleanly, pure, spiritual, unmixed, near to the holy word of God; it is that which we would seek, even the favor of God that he beareth to his people; not simple gladness, but the gladness and goodness of the Lord's chosen. And sure, (though I be the weakest of his witnesses, and unworthy to be among the meanest of them, and am afraid that the Cause be hurt—but it cannot be lost—by my unbelieving faintness,) I would not desire a deliverance, separated from the deliverance of the Lord's cause and people. It is enough to me to sing, when Zion singeth; and to triumph, when Christ triumpheth. I should judge it an unhappy joy, to rejoice when Zion sigheth. "Not one hoof"[1] will be your peace.

If Christ doth own me, let me be in the grave in a bloody winding-sheet, and go from the scaffold in four quarters, to grave or no grave. I am his debtor to seal with sufferings this precious truth; but, oh! when it cometh to the push, I dare say nothing, considering my weakness, wickedness, and faintness. But fear not ye. Ye are not, ye shall not be alone, the Father is with you. It was not an unseasonable, but a seasonable and necessary duty ye were about. Fear Him who is Sovereign. Christ is Captain of the castle and Lord of the keys. The cooling well-spring, and refreshment from the promises, are more than the frownings of the furnace. I see snares and temptations in capitulating, composing, ceding, minching[2] with distinctions of circumstances, formalities, compliments, and extenuations in the cause of Christ. A long spoon, the broth is hell's hot:[3]—hold a distance from carnal compositions; and much nearness to the Fountain, to the favor and refreshing light from the Father of lights speaking in his oracles;—this is sound health and salvation. Angels, men, Zion's elders eye us; but what of all these? Christ is by us, and looketh on us, and writeth up all. Let us pray more; and look less to men.

Remember me to Mr. Scott, and to all the rest. Blessings be

[1] Exod. x. 26.

[2] Mincing.

[3] In allusion to the Scottish proverb—"They have need of a long spoon who sup with the Devil."

upon the head of such as are separated from their brethren. Joseph is a fruitful bough by a well.

Grace be with you.

Your loving brother and companion in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, 1660.

LETTER CCCXLVI.

MR. RUTHERFORD'S *Judgment, sent to some Brethren, about petitioning His Majesty*[1] *after his return, and for owning such as were censured while about that so necessary a duty.*

REVEREND, AND DEAR BRETHREN,—It is a matter of difficulty to me to write at this distance, not having heard your debates. It seemeth that the Lord calleth us to give information to the King's Majesty of affairs. The Lord's admirable providence, in bringing him to his throne, and laying aside others who were enemies to the cause and sworn Covenant of God, so that now the government is in a right line, is to be adored; and I judge, (without prescribing,) that some should be sent to His Majesty to congratulate that providence; and that reason of our being so slow in sending should be rendered.

2. We should write, not in the name of the Kirk of Scotland, but in the name of a most considerable number of godly ministers, elders and professors, who both pray for the king, are obedient to his laws, and are under the oath of God—The sworn Reformation.

3. It is better now, than after sentences and trouble, to have recourse to him who is by place *Parens Patriæ.*

4. We should supplicate in all humility for protection, countenance, far more for lawful liberty to fear the bond of the oath of the dreadful and most high Lord; avouching to His Majesty, that the Lord, his holy name being interposed, will own that Covenant, and bless His Majesty with a happy and successful reign, in the owning thereof and kissing of the Son of God. And when the Lord shall be pleased to grant that to us, which concerneth religion, the beauty of his house, the propagating of the Gospel, the government of the Lord's Kingdom, without popery, prelacy, unwritten traditions and ceremonies; let His Majesty try our loyalty with what commands he will be pleased to lay on us, and see if we be found rebellious.

5. We should disclaim such as have sinfully complied with the late usurpers; produce our written testimonies against them; our not accepting of offices and places of trust from them; our testimonies against their usurpation, covenant-breaking, toleration of all religions, corrupt sectarian ways, for which the Lord hath broken them.

[1] Charles II.

6. We are represented to His Majesty as such as would not consent that the remonstrance of the western forces should be condemned by the Commission of the General Assembly: whereas 1. We did humbly desire, that the judicature should not condemn nor censure that Remonstrance, till the gentlemen were heard, and their reasons discussed. 2. Whatever demur was as to the banding or combining part of it, we were and are obliged to believe, that they had no sectarian design therein, nor levelling intention. 3. They are gentlemen most loyal, and never were enemies to His Majesty's royal power; but only desired that security might be had for religion and the people of God; persons disaffected to religion and the sworn Covenant abandoned; otherwise they were, and still are willing to hazard lives and estates, for the just greatness and safety of His Majesty, in the maintenance of the true religion, Covenant, and cause of God. The only difficulty will be, where to have fit men to send. But as it will be both sin and shame for us to desert our undeservedly now censured brethren; so it will be our sin and reproach sinfully to comply with such things and courses, as we testified against, and confessed to God.

I can say no more at present, but that I am

Your loving brother, S. R.

St. Andrew's, 1660

LETTER CCCXLVII.

MR. RUTHERFORD'S *Judgment of a Draught, or minute of a Petition, to have been presented to the Committee of Estates, by those Ministers who were then prisoners in the Castle of Edinburgh, for that other well-known petition to His Majesty, about which they were, when seized upon and made prisoners.*

But that no man may mistake or judge amiss of persons so fixed in the cause, and faithful in their generations; know, that this Draught was not sent to Mr. Rutherford, as a paper concluded and condescended upon among these Brethren, whose love to truth made them in all things, so tender, that they were ever fond to abstain from all appearance of evil; but it was more like the suggestion of some other men, (wherein was laid before them what kind of address would most probably please, waving the just measures of what was simply duty in their circumstances,) than anything flowing from themselves, as the product of a mature deliberation. And secondly, know, (which confirmeth what was said,) that whatever it was, or whoever gave the rise to it, yet it was never made use of, nor presented to the Committee of Estates, by any of those faithful men, whose praise, for their fidelity, fixedness, real and untainted integrity, is in the churches of Christ.

DEAR BROTHER,—I am, as ye know, straitened as another suffering man; but dare not petition this Committee:—

1. Because it draweth us to capitulate with such as have the advantage of the mount, the Lord so disposing for the present: and to bring the matters of Christ to yea and no, (ye being prisoners, and they the powers,) is a hazard.

2. A speaking to them in write,[1] and passing in silence the sworn Covenant, and the cause of God, which is the very present controversy, is contrary to the practice of Christ and the Apostles, who, being accused or not accused, avouched Christ to be the Son of God, and the Messias, and that the dead must rise again, even when the adversary misstated the question. Yea, silence on the cause of God, which adversaries persecute, seemeth a tacit deserting of the cause, when the state of the question is known to beholders:—and I know that the brethren intend not to leave the cause.

3. I know of no offence that you have given, (I will not say what offence may be taken,) either as to the matter or manner of your petition: for, if what you have done be a necessary duty laid aside by others, a duty can never give an offence to Christ, and so none to men. But Christians will look upon a pious, harmless, and innocent petition to the Prince, in the matters of the Lord's honor and good of his Church, though proffered by one or two, when they are silent whose it is to speak and act, as a seasonable duty.

4. The Draught of that Petition which you sent me, speaketh not one word of the Covenant of God; for the adhering to which you now suffer, and which is the object of men's hatred; and the destruction whereof is the great work of the times: and your silence, in this nick[2] of time appeareth to be a non-confession of Christ before men; and you want nothing to beget an uncleanly deliverance, but the profession of silence.

5. There is a promise and real purpose, as the Petition saith, to live peaceably under the King's authority. But, 1. Ye do not answer so candidly and ingenuously the mind of the rulers, who, to your knowledge, mean a far other thing by authority, than ye do. For ye mean, his just authority, his authority in the Lord, and his just greatness, in the maintenance of true religion, as in the Covenant, Confession of Faith, and Catechisms, is expressed from the word of God; they mean his supreme authority, and absolute prerogative above laws, as their acts make clear, and as their practice is; for they refused, to such as were unwilling to subscribe their bond, to add authority in the Lord, or, just and lawful authority, or, authority as it is expressed in the Covenant: but this Draught of a Petition, under your own hand, yieldeth the sense and meaning to them which they crave. 2. That authority for which they contend, is exclusive of the sworn Covenant; so that except ye had said, "We shall be subject to the King's authority in the Lord, or according to the sworn Covenant," ye say nothing to the point in hand; and that sure is not your meaning. 3. Whoever promised so much of peaceable living under His Majesty's authority, leaving out the exposition of the Fifth Commandment, as your petition doth, may, upon the very same ground, subscribe the bond refused by the godly; and so you pass from the Covenant, and make all those by-past actings of this Kirk and State, these years by-

[1] Writing. [2] Juncture.

past, to be horrid rebellion; and how deep that guiltiness draweth, consider.

6. A condemning of the Remonstrance, simply and without any limitation and distinction, is a condemning of many precious ones in the land, and a passing from the causes of God's wrath, which is the chief matter of the Remonstrance.

7. That nothing is before your eyes but the exoneration of your conscience, is indeed believed by the godly who know you; but a passing in silence of the honest materials in your former petition to His Majesty, seemeth to be a deserting thereof, since, in all your Petition, ye do not once say, ye cannot but adhere to that pious Petition, as your necessary duty. And, that ye intend in the Petition the happiness of His Majesty, is also believed.

Dear brother, show to our brethren, that the Lord Christ in your persons, hath stated a question betwixt him and the powers on earth. The only wise God lead you now, when he hath brought you forth in public, so to act as if ye did see Jesus Christ by you, and beholding you. It is easy for such as are on the shore, to throw a counsel to those that are tossed in the sea; but, only by living by faith, and by fetching strength and comfort from Christ, can ye be victorious, and have right to the precious promises of the Tree of life, of the hidden Manna, of the gifted Morning-Star, and the like, made to those who overcome: to Whose strength and grace, brethren, who desire with me to remember you, do recommend you.

I am, dear brother,
Yours in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's, 1660.

LETTER CCCXLVIII.

FOR THE RIGHT HONORABLE, MY LADY VISCOUNTESS OF KENMURE.

Madam,—It is not my part to be unmindful of you. Be not afflicted for your brother, the Marquis of Argyll. As to the main, in my weak apprehension, the seed of God being in him, and love to the people of God and his cause, it shall be well. The making of particular reckoning with the Lord, and of peace with God, and owning of his cause, when too many disown it, will make his peace with the King the surer. The Lord is beginning to reckon with such as did forsake his cause and covenant: and until we return to him, our peace shall not be like a river and as the waves of the sea. However, the opening of the bosom to take in all the Malignants, can produce no better fruits. The Lord calleth us to flee into our chambers, and shut the doors, till the indignation be over, (Isaiah xxvi. 20.) The lily among the thorns is so served: he hideth himself, and our mountain is removed, and we are troubled; but the Lord reigneth, let the earth tremble, and let the

earth rejoice. The Lord without blood broke the yoke of usurping oppressors and laid them aside: the same Lord can settle throne and kingdom on the pillars of Heaven. But, oh, the controversy the Lord hath with Edom and those who covenanted with us and then sold us; and with those of whom the Holy Ghost speaketh, (Lam. ii. 14,) "Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee; they have not discovered thine iniquity to turn away thy captivity, but have seen for thee false burdens, and causes of banishment." The time of Jacob's suffering is but short, and the vision will speak. Could we be from under deadness, and watch unto wrestling and prayer with the Lord, and live more by faith, we should be more than conquerors. Wait upon the Lord; faint not.

The Lord Jesus be with your spirit.

Yours, at all respective observance, in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's, July 24, 1660.

LETTER CCCXLIX.

FOR MISTRESS CRAIG, UPON THE DEATH OF HER HOPEFUL SON, WHO WAS DROWNED WHILE WASHING HIMSELF IN A RIVER IN FRANCE.

MISTRESS,—You have so learned Christ, as, now in the furnace, what dross, what shining of faith may appear, must come forth. I heard of the removal of your son, Mr. Thomas. Though I be dull enough in discerning, yet I was witness to some spiritual savoriness of the new birth and hope of the Resurrection, which I saw in the hopeful youth, when he was, as was feared, a-dying in this city. And, since it was written and advisedly appointed, in the spotless and holy decree of the Lord, where, and before what witnesses, and in what manner, whether by a fever, the mother being at the bed-side, or by some other way in a far country, (dear patriarchs died in Egypt; precious to the Lord, have wanted burials, Psalm lxxix. 3,) your safest will be, to be silent, and command the heart to utter no repining and fretting thoughts of the holy dispensation of God.

1. The man is beyond the hazard of dispute; the precious youth is perfected and glorified.

2. Had the youth lain year and day pained beside a witnessing mother, it had been pain and grief lengthened out to you in many portions, and every parcel would have been a little death; now His holy Majesty hath in one lump and mass, brought to your ears the news, and hath not divided the grief into many portions.

3. It was not yesterday's thought, nor the other year's statute; but a counsel of the Lord of old: and "who can teach the Almighty knowledge?"

4. There is no way of quieting the mind, and of silencing the heart of a mother, but godly submission. The readiest way for peace and consolation to clay-vessels is, that it is a stroke of the Potter and Former of all things; and since the holy Lord hath loosed the grip,[1] when it was fastened sure on your part, I know that your light, and I hope that your heart also, will yield. It is not safe to be at pulling and drawing with the omnipotent Lord. Let the pull go with him, for he is strong; and say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

5. His holy method and order is to be adored; sometimes the husband before the wife, and sometimes the son before the mother; so hath the only wise God ordered; and when he is sent before, and not lost, in all things give thanks.

6. Meditate not too much on the sad circumstances—the mother was not witness to the last sigh,—possibly, cannot get leave to wind the son, nor to weep over his grave, and, he was in a strange land:—there is a like nearness to Heaven out of all the countries of the earth.

7. This did not spring out of the dust. Feed and grow fat by this medicine and fare of the only wise Lord. It is art and the skill of faith to read what the Lord writeth upon the cross, and to spell and construct[2] right his sense; often we miscall[3] words and sentences of the cross, and either put nonsense on his rods, or burden his Majesty with slanders and mistakes, when he mindeth for us thoughts of peace and love—even to do us good in the latter end.

8. It is but a private stroke on a family, and little to the public, arrows shot against grieved Joseph, and the afflicted; but, ah! dead, senseless, and guilty people of God. This is the day of Jacob's trouble!

9. There is a bad way of wilful swallowing of a temptation, and not digesting it, or laying it out of memory without any victoriousness of faith. The Lord, who forbiddeth fainting, forbiddeth also despising. But it is easier to counsel than to suffer: the only wise Lord furnish patience. It were not amiss to call home the other youth.

I am not a little afflicted for my Lady Kenmure's condition. I desire you, when ye see her, to remember my humble respects to her. My wife heartily remembereth her to you; and is wounded much in mind with your present condition, and suffereth with you.

Grace be with you.

Yours, in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Aug. 4, 1660.

[1] Hold. [2] Construe. [3] Mispronounce.

LETTER CCCL.

FOR MY REVEREND BROTHER, CHRIST'S SOLDIER IN BONDS, MR. JAMES GUTHRIE, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT STIRLING.

DEAR BROTHER,—We are very oft comforted with the word of promise; though we stumble not a little at the work of holy providence; some earthly men flourishing as a green herb, and the people of God counted as sheep for the slaughter, and killed all the day long; and yet both word of promise, and works of providence, are from Him whose ways are equal, straight, holy, and spotless.

As for me, when I think of God's dispensations, he might justly have brought to the market-cross, and to the light, my unseen and secret abominations, which would have been no small reproach to the holy name, and precious truths of Christ; but in mercy he hath covered these, and shapen and carved out more honorable causes of suffering, of which we are unworthy.

And now, dear brother, much dependeth upon the way and manner of suffering, especially, that his precious truths be owned with all heavenly boldness, and a reason of our hope given in meekness and fear; and the royal crown, and absolute supremacy of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of the kings of the earth, avouched as becometh: for certain it is that Christ will reign the Father's King in Mount Zion; and his sworn Covenant will not be buried. It is not denied, that our practical breach of Covenant first, and then our legal breach thereof, by enacting the same mischief and framing it into a law, may heavily provoke our sweetest Lord; yet there are a few names in the land that have not defiled their garments, and a holy seed on whom the Lord will have mercy, like the four or five olive-berries upon the top of the shaken olive-tree; and their eye shall be toward the Lord their Maker. Think it not strange that men devise against you; whether it be to exile,—the earth is the Lord's; or perpetual imprisonment,—the Lord is your light and liberty; or a violent and public death,—for the Kingdom of Heaven consisteth in a fair company of glorified martyrs and witnesses, of whom Jesus Christ is the chief Witness, who for that cause was born, and came into the world. Happy are ye, if you give testimony to the world of your preferring Jesus Christ to all powers: and the Lord will make the innocency and Christian loyalty of his defamed and despised witnesses in this land to shine to after-generations, and will take the Man-child up to God and to his throne, and prepare a hiding-place in the wilderness for the Mother, and cause the earth to help the Woman. Be not terrified; fret not; forgive your enemies; bless, and curse not; for though both ye and I should be silent, sad and heavy is the judgment and indignation from the Lord, that is abiding the unfaithful watchmen of the Church of Scotland. The souls under

the altar are crying for justice, and there is an answer returned already :—the Lord's salvation will not tarry.

Cast the burden of wife and children on the Lord Christ; he careth for you and them ; your blood is precious in his sight. The everlasting consolations of the Lord bear you up, and give you hope ; for your salvation, (if not deliverance,) is concluded.

Your own brother, S. R.

St. Andrew's, Feb. 15, 1661.

LETTER CCCLI.

TO MR. ROBERT CAMPBELL.

Reverend, and dear Brother,—Ye know that this is a time in which all men almost seek their own things, and not the things of Jesus Christ. Ye are your lone,[1] as a beacon on the top of a mountain ; but faint not, Christ is a numerous multitude himself; yea, millions. Though all the nations were convened against him round about, yet doubt not but he will, at last, arise for the cry of the poor and needy.

For me, I am now near to eternity, and for ten thousand worlds I dare not adventure to pass from the Protestation against the corruptions of the time, nor go alongst with the shameless apostasy of the many silent and dumb watchmen of Scotland ; but I think it my last duty to enter a protestation in Heaven, before the righteous Judge, against the practical and legal breach of the Covenant, and all oaths imposed on the consciences of the Lord's people, and all Popish superstitions and idolatrous mandates of men. Know that the overthrow of the sworn Reformation, the introducing of Popery and the Mystery of iniquity, is now set on foot in the Three Kingdoms; and whosoever would keep their garments clean are under that command, "Touch not, taste not, handle not."

The Lord calleth you, dear brother, to be still "steadfast, unmovable, and abounding in the work of the Lord." Our royal kingly Master is upon his journey, and will come, and will not tarry ; and blessed is the servant who shall be found watching when he cometh. Fear not men, for the Lord is your light and salvation. It is true, it is somewhat sad and comfortless that ye are your lone ;[1] but so it was with our precious Master : nor are ye your lone,[1] for the Father is with you. It is possible that I shall not be an eye-witness to it in the flesh ; but I believe He cometh quickly who will remove our darkness, and will shine gloriously in the Isle of Britain, as a crowned king, either in a formally sworn covenant, or in his own glorious way ; which I leave to the determination of his infinite wisdom and goodness. And this is the hope and confidence of a dying man who is longing and fainting for the salvation of God.

[1] By yourself alone.

Beware of the ensnaring bonds and obligations, by any handwrit or otherwise, to give unlimited obedience to any authority, but only in the Lord; for all innocent self-defence, (which is according to the Covenant, the Word of God, and the laudable example of the Reformed Churches,) is now intended to be utterly subverted and condemned: and what is taken from Christ, as the flower of his prerogative royal, is now put upon the head of a Mortal Power, which must be that great Idol of indignation that provoketh the eyes of his glory. Dear brother, let us mind the rich promises that are made to those that overcome, knowing that those that endure to the end shall be saved.

Thus recommending you to the rich grace of God, I remain,

Your affectionate brother, in Christ, S. R.

St. Andrew's, 1661.

LETTER CCCLII.

TO ABERDEEN.

REVEREND, AND DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,—Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

There were some who rendered thanks, with knees bowed to Him, "of whom is named the whole family in Heaven and earth," when they heard of "your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus;" and rejoiced not a little, that where Christ was scarce named in savoriness and power of the Gospel, even in Aberdeen, there Christ hath a few names precious to him, who shall walk with him in white. We looked on it, (He knoweth whom we desire to serve in our spirit, in the Gospel of his Son,) as a part of the fulfilling of that, "The wilderness and solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as a rose;" but now it is more grievous to us than a thousand deaths, when we hear that you are shaken, and so soon removed from that which you once acknowledged to be the way of God.

Dearly beloved, the sheep follow Christ who calleth them by name; a stranger they will not follow; but they flee from him, for they know not the voice of a stranger. Ye know the way, "by which ye were sealed to the day of redemption;" and ye received the Spirit, by the hearing of faith. Part not with that way, except ye see there be no rest for your souls thereon; neither listen to them that say, "Many were converted under episcopal as well as under presbyterial government;" and yet the godly gave testimony against the bishops; for the instruments of conversion loathed episcopacy, with the ceremonies thereof, and never sealed it with their sufferings. But we shall desire instances of any engaged by oaths, and by the sufferings of the faithful messengers of God,

and the manifestation of the Lord's presence, in the way ye now forsake, who yet turned from it, and went one step toward sinful separation, and did it in that way ye now aim at, and did yet flourish and grow in grace: but we can bring proofs of many who left it, and went further on to abominable ways of error. And you have it not in your power where you shall lodge at night, having once left the way of God; and many we know lost peace and communion with God, and fell into a condition of withering, and, not being able to find their lovers, were forced to return to their first Husband. We shall entreat you to consider what a stumbling it is to malignant opposers of the way and cause of God, who with their ears heard you, and with their eyes saw you, so strenuously take part with the godly in their sufferings, and profess yourselves for religion, truth, doctrine, government of the house of God, his covenant and cause; if now you build again what you once destroyed, and destroy what you builded. And will you not make yourselves, by so doing, transgressors? How shall it wound the hearts of the godly, stain the profession, darken the glory of the Gospel, shake the faith of many, weaken the hands of all, if ye, and ye first of all in this kingdom, will stretch out the hand to raze the walls of our Jerusalem, by reason of which the Lord made her terrible as an army with banners: for, when kings came and saw the palaces and bulwarks thereof, they marvelled and were troubled, and hasted away; fear took hold of them there, and pain as of a woman in travail. And we shall be grieved, if you shall be heirs to the guiltiness of breaking down the same hedge of the vineyard, for the which the sad indignation of God pursueth this day the Royal Family, many nobles, houses great and fair, and all the prelatical party in these Three Kingdoms. And when your dear brethren are weak and fainting, shall we believe that ye will leave us, and be divided from this so blessed a conjunction? The Lord Jesus Christ, we trust, will walk in the midst of the Golden Candlesticks, and be with us, if ye will be gone from us.

Beloved in the Lord, we cannot but be persuaded better things of you; and we will not conceal from you, that we are ignorant what to answer when we are reproved on your behalf, in regard that your change to another gospel-way (which the Lord avert) is so much the more scandalous, that the sudden alteration, unknown to us before, now overtaketh you, when men come amongst you against whom the furrows of the fields of Scotland do complain. Forget not, dear brethren, that Christ hath now the fan in his hand, and that this is also the day of the Lord, which shall burn as an oven; and, that Christ now sitteth as a refiner of silver, purifying the sons of Levi, and purging them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness; and, that those who keep the word of his (not their own) patience, shall be delivered from the hour of temptation, that shall come on all the earth to try them.

If ye exclude all non-converts from the visible city of God, in

which, daily, multitudes in Scotland, in all the four quarters of the land, above whatever our fathers saw, throng into Christ, shall they not be left to the lions and wild beasts of the forest, even to Jesuits, Seminary-priests, and other seducers? For the magistrate hath no power to compel them to hear the Gospel, nor have ye any church-power over them, as ye teach: and they bring not love to the Gospel and to Christ, out of the womb with them; and so they must be left to embrace what religion is most suitable to corrupt nature.

Nor can it be a way approven[1] by the Lord in Scripture, to excommunicate from the Visible Church, (which is the office-house of the free grace of Christ, and his draw-net,) all the multitudes of non-converts, baptized, and visibly within the Covenant of Grace, which are in Great Britain, and all the reformed churches; and so to shut the gates of the Lord's gracious calling upon all these, because they are not, in your judgment, chosen to salvation, when once you are within yourselves. For how can the Lord call Egypt his people, and Assyria the work of his hands, and all the Gentiles, (who for numbers are as the flocks of Kedar, and the abundance of the sea,) the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, if you number infants, as many do, and all such as your charity cannot judge converts, as others do, among heathens and pagans who have not a visible claim and interest in Christ? The candlestick is not yours, nor the house; but Christ fixeth and removeth the one, and buildeth or casteth down the other, according to his sovereignty. We in humility judge ourselves, though the chief of sinners, the sons of Zion and of the seed of Christ: if ye remove from us, and carry from hence the candlestick, let our Father be Judge, and show us why the Lord hath bidden ye come out from among us. We look upon this Visible Church, though black and spotted, as the hospital and guest-house of sick, halt, maimed, and withered, over which Christ is Lord, Physician, and Master; and we would wait upon those that are not yet in Christ, as our Lord waited upon us and you both. We, therefore, your brethren, children of one Father, cannot but, with tears and exceeding sorrow of heart, earnestly entreat, beseech, and obtest you, by the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, by his sufferings and precious ransom which he paid for us both, by the consolations of his Spirit, by your appearance before the dreadful tribunal of our Lord Jesus; yea, and charge you before God and the same Lord Jesus; "who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing, and in his Kingdom;" break not the spirits and hearts of those to whom ye are dear as their own soul; forsake not the assemblies of the people of God; let us not divide.

Not a few of the people of God in this shire of Fife, in whose name I now write, dare say, if ye depart, that ye will leave Christ behind you with us, and the Golden Candlesticks, and will cast yourselves, we much fear, out of the hearts and prayers of thousands dear to Jesus Christ in Scotland. Therefore, before ye fix

[1] Approved.

judgment and practice on any untrodden path, let a day of humiliation be agreed upon by us all, and our Father's mind and will inquired, through our one common Saviour; and let us see one another's faces at best conveniency; and plead the interest of Christ, and be comforted, and not stumbled [1] at your ways.

So, expecting your answer, we shall pray that the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the Everlasting Covenant, may make you perfect in every good work to do his will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; and I shall remain,

Your affectionate brother, in the Lord, S. R.

St. Andrew's.

[1] Made to stumble.

THE END.

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